

CHAPTER—4

Depiction of Disability in Salman Rushdie's *Shame*

Shame is Salman Rushdie's third novel which was published in 1983. It won him French literary prize, Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1983. It employs the technique of magic realism which is "commingling of the improbable and the mundane", in Sulman Rushdie's words (Bowers 3). It implies that the novel mixes a realistic view with the magical and supernatural elements. It can be studied as a political allegory with respect to the political system of Pakistan in which characters and families represent the politicians and political parties, respectively. For instance, the characters of Iskander Harappa and General Raza Hyder represent former Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, respectively. The term 'Peccavistan' (Rushdie 88) represents the political territory of the existing Pakistani. Every character, theme or incident has almost two layers of meaning which is an essential characteristic of allegory. Catherine Candy states, "At the centre of his allegory of Pakistan Society move the figures of Bhutto and Zia, only thinly disguised by the veil thrown across them." (45)

The setting of the novel, *Shame*, is in the fictitious house in the border town of Q. situated on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Q. is believed to be a fictitious version of Quetta, Pakistan. The house is nicknamed as Nishapur which in reality was the home of the great Persian poet Omar Khayyam. The house is inhabited by the three sisters, namely Chunni, Munnee, and Bunny Shakil. They are daughters of Old Mr Shakil, a widower for eighteen years. He raises his daughters with an iron morality with the help of nurses. Hashmat Bibi, the housemaid, shouts out at them

that their father, Old Mr Shakil, is breathing his last. They feel delighted and hope to become rich owners after his death. Ironically, it turns out to be their arid dream for he leaves them in high debt. Maintaining their snobbish attitude, they host the party inviting imperialists and few locals in order to hide the ruin of their richness. The party continues through the night with pomp and show. However, this night emerges out as the night of shame for them because one of the three sisters has been impregnated in the same party. All the three sisters feign their conception all at once. They have the same cravings to suffer and experience the labour pain, though the two of them are phantom pregnancies and one of them is genuine. Finally, Omar Khayyam is born to three mothers. They own and raise him collectively behaving his mothers simultaneously by feeding him on their breasts one after another. (Rushdie)

Omar Khayyam, one of the protagonists of the novel, comes across people like Iskander Harappa and General Raza Hyder. He befriends with rich playboy, Iskander ("Isky") Harappa who marries Rani Humayun. The couple bears a daughter, Arjumand, nicknamed as 'Virgin Ironpants'. She determines to overcome her gender, sexually and professionally. On his 40th birthday, Iskander Harappa steps in politics. His relationship with Raza Hyder deteriorates, gradually. Raza Hyder, a military hero, feels proud to call himself 'Old Razor Guts'. He marries Bilquis Kemal and begins his family life. This marriage bears them two daughters, Sufiya Zinobia and Naveed who are nicknamed as 'Shame' and 'Good News', respectively. Sufiya Zinobia, the second but main protagonist of the novel, suffers from an intellectual disability in which there is inconsistency in the growth of mind and body. She is also slow in performing mental activities like thinking process. Rushdie states, "Too romantic a use to make of mental disability?" (120). Sufiya Zinobia is believed to have been infected with a mental disability from a fever during her infancy. Her shame eventually transforms

itself into a beast that persuades her to behead flock of turkeys. The treatment of Sufiya Zinobia's intellectual disability gives birth to the second narrative which involves her relationship with a doctor, Omar Khayyam. While treating Sufiya's immunological disorder, he falls in love with her and marries her. In spite of her disability, Sufiya Zinobia is familiar with the fact that the husband is meant to impregnate women and give them babies. Instead, Omar impregnates Sufiya's maid Shahbanou. The beast again hijacks the situation and forces four young men to have sexual intercourse Sufiya Zinobia, ending with amputation of their heads. Sufiya's husband, Omar, and her father, Raza Hyder understand the root cause of her problem. They give her medicine and detain her though they are unable to kill her. (Rushdie)

Raza Hyder has been posted in-charge of the army by Prime Minister Iskander Harappa. But he, in turn, overthrows Iskander Harappa and institutes Islamic law. Iskander Harappa is tried and imprisoned followed by his execution. The usurper, Raza, is in turn overthrown by a military coup. He escapes in the guise of a woman with Bilquis and Omar to a safer fortress-like Nishapur. However, Omar's three mothers Chunni, Munnee, and Bunny Shakil rejoice to sight Raza who they believe is the murderer of their second son Babar Shakil. Then the three sisters send out Raza Hyder with great gore in the lift they have specially customized to serve as their means of limited communications with the outside world. (Rushdie)

The beast that controls Sufiya Zinobia hounds Omar on his grandfather's deathbed followed by his beheading. The shell of Sufiya Zinobia disintegrates and sets her soul free. Eventually, both the spouse-protagonists are consumed by a great fire. This novel is quite relevant for the researcher to study and analyse the character of Sufiya Zinobia and thereby from a disability perspective.

The novel *Shame* has been analysed in various ways by numerous writers. For instance, Rebekah Reilly explored the fragmented realities of the novel, allowing multiple histories to coexist in a single space of the novel. He said that this novel has multiple stories with several layers of realities that need to be explored. He mentioned “Rushdie’s fragmented narration is the only way he can present a cohesive picture. It encapsulates the complex identity issues of the nation and the self that are dealt with in this text.” (8)

Shrikant Jadhav examined problematization of history in Salman Rushdie’s *Shame*. He labelled it as postmodern novel and classified it under ‘historiographic metafiction’. The novel is explored as a subversive text that problematizes monolithic discourse and objectivity of history. It rather emphasised on multiple voices and alternative histories. The decentralization of “historical figures in history is achieved” through the rewriting of the political history of Pakistan by peripheral characters. (144)

Dipanjoy Mukherjee analysed the novel, *Shame*, from a postcolonial point of view with his focus on the narration of nation. He stated that *Shame* stands for the trauma of migration. In an interview with Ashutosh Varshney, Salman Rushdie said that “It is a novel about the changes of communities and individuals below the compulsion of communities.” (211)

Having examined all other reviews of Salman Rushdie’s *Shame* including the above-mentioned ones, it has been found out that there is hardly any work that deals in detail with the disability dimension of the novel. Therefore, the researcher has undertaken the project of exploring the same novel from a disability point of view. With reference to the disabled perspective, the main character under focus is Sufiya

Zinobia who is depicted as intellectually disabled. The analysis of the novel, *Shame* focuses on Sufiya Zenobia's character who is described with the linguistic terms like disability, impairment and handicapped.

Joan Blaska states that language has the power of affecting the image of disabled people through words and phrases that people use to speak and write about them. Even the order in which they are arranged engenders positive and negative impressions regarding disabled people (26). Therefore, while looking at the representation of disabled characters, it is essential for every researcher to take notice of the language that is used to represent disabled people. Language shapes public opinion and thinking. It is also an important component of identity formation. Thus, negative and positive identity is the function of language as well. In *Shame*, Rushdie describes one of the Bariamma's brothers as a mental-case or fool. The terms like mental-case and fool are used interchangeably with the passage of time. It implies that mentally ill people are ridden with foolishness. This linguistic association is highly problematic for the scholars of Disability Studies vis-à-vis people with disability in particular. It sends out a wrong message about people with disability who are understood and nicknamed through the same negative terms. Salman Rushdie writes, "She discovered that since the generation of Bariamma, who had two sisters, Raza's maternal great-aunts, both widowed, as well as three brothers- a landlord, a wastrel and a mental-case fool" (Rushdie 75). And elsewhere in the novel, the term 'mental-case' has been employed to describe Sufiya Zinobia. This indiscriminate usage of offensive linguistic expressions not only stigmatizes a single individual of the disabled community but also understands the rest of the disabled community in the same vein. It implies that people generalise on the basis of limited language used in books, movies, serials etc. It is utterly an injustice with disabled people because they

pay for the uncommitted offence. Rushdie states, “Her elder daughter, the mental-case, began to blush.” (135)

The writer has wittingly or unwittingly used a long list of adjectives like poor, wrong and many more for the disabled character, Sufiya Zinobia. This selection of words with their exclusive use for disabled character vilifies the entire disabled community because people often make a generalization about disabled people. Although common man doesn't come across intellectually disabled people, he possesses a fixed notion about them. These rigid notions are mostly derived from linguistic terms used for them in books but it is not fair to stigmatize them linguistically when they have been already oppressed on the basis of their disability. Many times, Rushdie resorts to using such language while giving the description of Sufiya Zinobia. Rushdie observes, “Poor Sufiya Zinobia, can enter the narrative, head first down the birth canal. He won't have to wait long; she's almost on her way” (71). The writer takes the liberty to describe her character as childish which can be interpreted differently, ranging from foolish to irresponsible. She is said to have shown this behaviour after marriage with Omar Khayyam who is persuaded to accept her nature. Rushdie writes, “Omar Khayyam was forced to accept without argument Sufiya Zinobia's child-like fondness for moving furniture around” (71). Sufiya Zinobia is represented as immature who, with her child-like wish, often wants to shift furniture around the room. “Intensely aroused by these forbidden deeds, she rearranged tables, chairs, lamps, whenever nobody was watching, like a favourite secret game, which she played with a frighteningly stubborn gravity.” (Rushdie 71)

The use of language affects people with disability gravely because language shapes opinion and thinking of the people. Language works as a lens to look at any problem in a particular way. Therefore, the dignified language can prove significantly

helpful in improving the stereotypical thinking of non-disabled people towards disabled ones. This theorization is supported by Benjamin L. Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis which says "that the particular language people use determines how they see the world" (Morgan 230). Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf hypothesis propose that the way of thinking of people is strongly influenced by their native language. It implies that the thoughts of one language cannot be grasped exactly in the same way by those belonging to the second language. The hypothesis underlines that "the characteristics of a particular language actually shape the ways that users of the language think about things" (ibid 230). Therefore, the wrong usage of terminology, with regard to disabled people, definitely informs disabled lives because the language is believed to be the reflection of how people see each other in society. The linguistic theory suggests that it is utterly impossible to have an idea without a vocabulary that enables us to think about that idea. Therefore, to think about disability positively, there is a need for coining new words and vocabulary to express disability and its different conditions.

Moreover, Rushdie has recurrently used the term 'handicap' in his novel *Shame* but it has been described in terms of individual deficiency. Presently, the term 'handicap' is strongly objected by disabled activists on grounds of its adverse connotations. Though the term 'handicap' is situational, Rushdie sometimes associates it even with circumcision. He writes, "there are many who would consider this a handicap" (21). The second time he uses the term 'handicap' in connection with Raza Hyder's stillbirth baby who has died of an umbilical cord looped around his neck. He mentions, "An infant came into the world handicapped by the irreversible misfortune of being dead before he was born" (Rushdie 82). Rushdie's definition of handicap shows deviance from the one given by the World Health Organization

(WHO). WHO defines handicap as a “disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from impairment or a disability, which limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal depending on age, sex, and social and cultural factors for that individual” (ICIDH 29). On the other hand, Rushdie defines handicap in terms of death and stone-like lifelessness. Rushdie remarks, “Being stone dead was a handicap” (Rushdie 83). WHO definition of handicap is positive and hopeful but it also draws on the Medical Model of disability. The stereotyping of disabled people through language is insidious because it makes public perception about disabled people negative and affects the individual image of disabled people. Moreover, the stereotypic language brings about their social exclusion, which in turn, affects their identity. The stereotypic linguistic expressions include usage of words like handicapped, crippled and confined. (Blaska 26)

Definitions of ‘handicap’ are often disastrous for people with disability because these definitions shape the thinking of common people about disabled people. Therefore, it is imperative for all the writers to write about people with disability with responsibility. The writers must explore their potentialities and represent them in a language suitable to bear such ideas. One negative statement of a writer poses threat to thousands of people and becomes instrumental in their stigmatization and marginalization. Somehow, Rushdie has used the two terms ‘handicap’ and ‘impairment’ interchangeably, though there is a huge difference between them technically. Rushdie seems to have not been in agreement with the WHO definition of ‘handicap’ which suggests that impairment occurs at the level of the organ. WHO observes, “Impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function” (ICIDH 27). Raza Hyder’s stillbirth baby dies of an umbilical cord that gets twisted around his neck. This appears more like a problem of

impairment or disability than as a problem of handicap. The terms associated with disabled people are used by writers across the board, indiscriminately.

Sufiya Zinobia's intellectual disability is highlighted frequently. Kothari mentions that "intellectual disability is characterized both by a significantly below-average score on a test of mental ability or intelligence and by limitations in the ability to function in areas of daily life, such as communication, self-care and getting along in social situations and social activities" (44). Her intellectual disability is represented through statements like 'twelve-year-old girl with three-year-old mind' and words like 'simpleton girl', 'stunted intelligence', 'nitwit' and 'broken mind'. As an aftermath of contracting fever followed by her admittance in hospital, she is depicted as the one whose immune system is fighting against her own body. Rushdie observes, "Omar Khayyam devotes himself more or less full-time to the case of the simpleton girl whose body's defence mechanism has declared war against the very life they are supposed to be protecting." (142)

Although Rushdie resorts to using negative terms for Sufiya Zinobia, he ensures textual inclusion to the disabled character. Textual inclusion simply means the process of giving due space to disabled people by assigning them suitable roles in literary texts. The inclusion process entails the positive engagement of disabled people in literary texts through their portrayal as protagonists, antagonists or minor characters. So far as the novel, *Shame* is concerned, Salman Rushdie has given central space to Sufiya Zenobia, that is, she enjoys the privilege of a protagonist in the novel. The involvement of the disabled character as the protagonist of the novel rejects the bias against abnormal characters. Rushdie remarks, "The heroine of our story, the wrong miracle, Sufiya Zinobia, was as small a baby as anyone had ever seen" (89). In

literary writings, the inclusion of a disabled person as a major character is a rare practice. Readers often seek to identify themselves with the protagonists who are generally normal and take cudgels against the villain who is, by and large, a disabled person. Gary L. Albrecht and Katherine D. Seelman state that, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was rarely any disabled person portrayed as the protagonist in novels. Moreover, realism also preferred normative characters and situations. The deviance is marginalized and average as the norm is preferred. (541)

E. M. Forester suggestively mentions in his book *Aspects of the Novel* that the inclusion of the disabled character in a novel seems unrealistic. “One knows a book isn’t real,” they say, “still one does expect it to be natural, and this angel or midget or ghost or silly delay about the child’s birth—no, it is too much”(75). The conservative readers might also oppose deviance from the given norm as they might not identify themselves with deviant characters. Analytically speaking, a female character with crooked teeth, pot-bellied stomach, bulky in size and blemished skin is rarely portrayed as a major character in the novels. It reinforces the norm of perfection for the character portrayal in the novel as disabled people are often given secondary roles only. (Beauchamp and Chung)

All such norms of the novel are shelved on Rushdie’s part by introducing a disabled person as the protagonist of the novel though textual inclusion of Sufiya as the protagonist of the novel appears to be political in nature. In order to carry forward the plot of the novel using the technique of magic realism, he requires a character who fits well both in the role of beast and human. Rushdie exploits the condition of disability to achieve this end. Therefore, he chooses Sufiya Zinobia as the protagonist to give the mundane and supernatural touch according to the need of the story. In other words, Sufiya Zinobia is subjected to the demand of story in accordance to

which she is transformed into a beast. She has been used as an emotional hostage for the emotional catharsis of the beast. Miles Beauchamp and Wendy V. Chung state that disability is used as a tool in literature. Generally, a disabled character is depicted as the protagonist of the novel only when it serves some ulterior motives or purpose for the writer, such as the purpose of driving the story forward or frightening or arousing laughter among people. Even the Russian writer Anton Chekov states that each element of the story must contribute to the totality of a story. Drawing on Chekov's theorization, the disabled characters like Sufiya Zinobia must serve some special purpose in the story. In an interview, Jean Jenkins observed that she gives space to the disabled character in her novel because "I needed somebody who was appealing but vulnerable." (Beauchamp and Chung)

Although the novel *Shame* projects disabled character, Sufiya Zinobia as its protagonist, it has shrunk the space of people with disability wherein they are generally defined in one or two stereotypical terms. Sometimes, characters with a disability do find space in the novel but they are not developed completely in terms of their identity, subjectivity and character. Their blindness or deafness becomes their identity marks. It advances the view that people with disability are often defined with the negative traits which are foregrounded in the narration. The same situation is experienced by a disabled character, Gulbaba, in the novel *Shame*. The disabled character, Gulbaba, is depicted as a servant in the novel. It gives birth to the notion that in real life too, disabled people don't have much role to play. Their identity is restricted to deafness and blindness or handicap. Rushdie states, "Behind the ayah is old Gulbaba, deaf, half-blind..." (95). The identity description of disabled people furthers the view that deficiency of sight or any other sense forms the core of their identity and their talent is ignored. For instance, a person having a problem in walking

is called lame and the person experiencing articulation problem is labelled as dumb. This negative description forms a cocoon around their potential and covers them away from the naked eye, thereby forming an overall negative image regarding people with disability. This description further stigmatizes them in public space.

Sufiya Zinobia is described in words very different from the ones that have been used for the normal character, Omar Khayyam. Although both Omar Khayyam and Sufiya Zinobia suffer from insomnia, its description is utterly different in both cases. Therefore, one of the identities given to Sufiya is insomniac. She is described in linguistic expressions like foolishness. She is shown as squeezing and cleaning away the motes of dust from her eyes in a way that expels her consciousness. However, the insomnia of normal character Omar Khayyam has been delineated in words that suggest his self-control. Thus, Sufiya's insomnia is described out of foolishness and Khayyam's insomnia out of self-will. Rushdie remarks:

His wife, the elder daughter of General Raza Hyder, was an insomniac too; but Omar Khayyam's Sleeplessness is not to be compared with hers, for while he was willed, she, foolish Sofiya Zinobia, would lie in bed squeezing her eyelids shut between her thumbs and forefingers, as if she could extrude consciousness through her eyelashes, like motes of dust, or tears. (22)

It is observed that people with disability are generally stigmatized in ways like representation, description and association. They are often seen as associated with creatures which degrade their worth of being human. The disabled character of the novel, Sufiya Zinobia, has been described as a mouse humiliating her human status, metaphorically. Rushdie states, "When the swaddled child was handled to Bilquis,

that lady couldn't forbear cry, faintly, 'Is that all, my God? So much huffery and puffery to push out only this mouse?' (89)

Sufiya Zinobia is identified as mentally retarded on account of her cognitive difference from the majority of the people. People like Sufiya Zinobia are considered abnormal and deviant. As far as normality is concerned, it is the highly contested and debatable term. It is constituted by the non-disabled majority who lay down its criteria. Socially constructed conventions of normality are highly exclusive in terms of emphasizing the homogeneity of structure and behaviour. Sufiya Zinobia is directly labelled as an abnormal child on grounds of her intellectual disability by her parents. Her mother, Bilquis, associates her with something erroneous that is bound to be accepted disappointedly. Rushdie remarks, "What normal child goes so beetroot hot that her clothes can smell of burning? But what to do, she went wrong and that's that, we must just grin and bear." (121)

Sufiya Zinobia's character description requires a minute examination because the narrator introduces her with multiple repulsive terms. At times, she is described as an idiotic figure because of her intellectual disability. She is also said to have contracted brain fever which has rendered her as an individual of idiotic stature. Rushdie observes, "Sufiya Zinobia contracted a case of brain fever that turned her into an idiot" (100). Even her blushing-out body has been strangely linked with innocence and purity though there is logically no sound connection between them. It indicates the common tendency to apply strange ways and associations for people with disability. Rushdie remarks, "Sufiya Zinobia, the idiot, is blushing. I did it to her, I think, to make her pure. Couldn't think of another way of creating purity in what is supposed to be the Land of the Pure...and idiots are, by definition, innocent." (120)

The overview of the novel suggests that Sufiya's disability is not purely personal in nature as is often claimed by the Medical Model of disability, rather it is constructed as is asserted by the Social Model of disability. Apart from this, her portrayal is affected by the cultural bias prevailing among the people which marks the importance of the Cultural Model of disability that holds the fate of a person responsible for one's disability. The proponents of Cultural Model claim that the cause of disability is transcendental in nature. Rushdie mentions, "It is a judgment, she cried beside her daughter's bed" (100). Moreover, they seek the advice of traditional health experts called *Hakims* for potions which have the magical power to heal disability. Sufiya Zinobia's mother, Bilqis, believes that Sufiya's disability is caused by some supernatural elements. Therefore, she searches for a local *Hakim* to get her daughter treated. Rushdie remarks:

She turned to a local Hakim who prepared an expensive liquid distilled from cactus roots, ivory dust and parrot feathers, which saved the girl's life but which had the effect of slowing her down for the rest of her years, because the unfortunate side-effect of a potion so filled with elements of longevity was to retard the progress of time inside the body of anyone to whom it was given. (100)

The process of treatment of disability by traditional *Hakims* is one of the major issues that require serious attention of the researchers because, in most likelihood, the *hakims* may complicate the disease. This process of causing multiple adverse side-effects of treatment is called 'iatrogenesis'. It is mentioned by Ivan Illich in his book *Medical Nemesis* while discussing the concept of medicalization. The medical or non-medical treatment may certainly cure disease like brain fever but it also gives birth to many more diseases or side-effects. This condition finds its

concrete example in Sufiya Zinobia's treatment. The potion given to her has indeed saved her life but it has also caused some irreversible deceleration effect. Rushdie remarks, "Bilquis was convinced she could discern in her not-yet-two-year-old-child the effects of that inner deceleration which could never be reversed." (100)

It is generally seen that the words used for the description of Sufiya Zinobia are often offensive and repulsive in nature. Sufiya Zinobia, a disabled character of the novel, has been marked out by depressing expressions like simpleton and goof. Rushdie observes, "Rani, a simpleton, a goof!" (101). Gruesome lexicon like this degrades her from the human level to subhuman level and makes her worthless and valueless. This choice of words for her description puts forth her negative image, generating negative vibrations against her. Further, the selective adverse description dilutes her real identity, pushing it far away from every naked eye. Defining her vitality, the writer compares her with lifeless grass. She is also called as birdbrain to signify her mental abnormality. Rushdie remarks, "Nothing upstairs. Straw instead of cabbage between the ears. Empty in the breadbin. To be done? But darling, there is nothing. That birdbrain, that mouse! I must accept it: she is my shame." (101)

Further, Sufiya Zinobia's comparison with vermin creatures dehumanizes her image. In addition to all this, her parents regard her as a symbol of shame for themselves because of her gender and disability. The term 'idiot child' has been repeatedly used to curse Sufiya Zinobia. Bilquis's uterus injury is also ascribed to Sufiya Zinobia, though it is caused during the birth of her non-disabled daughter, Naveed. Rushdie observes, "Even Rani Harappa in exile heard the rumours of dissension, of the idiot child whose mother called her 'shame' and treated her like mud, of the internal injury which made sons impossible" (119). This is the major issue that needs to be addressed because it drains out the confidence of the people with

disability, and Sufiya Zinobia represents that category in the movie. This usage of off-putting expressions for the character description of people with disability is very common across all texts, ranging from religious to creative texts. Their description is always fraught with humiliation. They are debased as disfigured and disgraced with subhuman terminology. This theorization is vindicated by the delineation of Sufiya Zinobia's character as a damaged individual. Rushdie observes, "Once, when she picked up her damaged daughter to play the traditional game of water-carrier, slinging Sufiya Zinobia on her back" (103). Contrary to the disabled characters, alluring and acceptable words are used to describe the normal characters. For example, Arjumand Harrapa is described as vibrant and energetic through youthful terms, while Sufiya is termed poor and idiot. Rushdie mentions, "More needs to be said about young Arjumand Harrapa, more will certainly be written about poor, idiot Sufiya Zinobia" (104). She is also described as a symbol of shame in the novel. None of the characters in the novel is said to have his or her origin in the dead except Sufiya Zinobia who is thought to be the incarnation of the corpse. Rushdie Remarks, "My Sufiya Zinobia grew out of the corpse of that murdered girl, although she will not be slaughtered by Raza Hyder." (116)

At times, Sufiya's intellectual disability has been identified as her illness. This statement seems in complete harmony with the Medical Model of disability wherein deviations, differences and distinctions are marked as diseases. This model of disability does not accommodate and celebrate diversities among human beings and highlight the disability as a symptom of severe pathological disorder. Sufiya's intellectual disability is directly stigmatized as a medical problem which can be rectified only with medical intervention, rejecting many other possible solutions to the problem. Medically, Sufiya's problem is internal and personal in nature. It has

nothing to do with the social aspects of the problem. However, the association of Sufiya's intellectual disability with illness is in sheer contrast with the social construction of disability in which disability and illness are not one and the same condition. But the two states are altogether different in nature. The proponents of Social Model believe that disability is a socially constructed phenomenon where illness may be subsumed social construction despite the pain inflicted by it. Rushdie observes, "The illness of his daughter." (101)

The representation of Sufiya Zinobia varies across the novel. Many a time, she is misrepresented as a character with excessively abnormal traits. She is termed as a sponge with a capacity to absorb unknown sentiments which do not hold true for any human being, naturally. These statements might prove very simple for a layman but for the scholar of Disability Studies, these pronouncements make a huge difference as they have a deep psychological impact on the minds of sensitive readers. Rushdie remarks, "The brain-fever that made Sufiya Zinobia preternaturally receptive to all sorts of things that float around in the ether enabled her to absorb, like a sponge, like a host of unfelt feelings." (122)

Sufiya Zinobia is delineated with drastic attributes to the extent that even the objectionable and insensitive term like 'retarded' is used to specify her abnormality. Kothari mentions that "mental retardation is defined as a condition of arrested or incomplete development of the mind of a person or sub-normality of intelligence" (44). Though the word 'retarded' has now been replaced by 'intellectual disability', its usage still continues problematising the status of intellectually disabled people. Rushdie remarks, "And once upon a time there was a retarded daughter, who for twelve years had been given to understand that she embodied her mother's shame" (135). Sufiya is represented as socially unacceptable which may or may not fall in line

with reality. She is shown pulling out her hair and tearing it into segments of small size. Thereby, she inflicts enormous pain upon herself. This is the routine task she has been shown busy with all day. She is shown engrossed in the act of hair-splitting. Rushdie observes, “Sufiya Zinobia at the age of twelve had formed the unattractive habit of tearing her hair.” (135)

Sufiya’s identity is restricted to an idiotic figure. Her memory is projected as the model of madness with which the behaviour of a sufferer can be compared and assessed. Rani Harrapa’s portrait on shawl draws a comparison between her own victimisation at the hands of Iskander Harappa and victimisation of Sufiya by her family though their experiences are different in nature. Rushdie remarks, “Iskander the assassin of possibility, immortalized on a cloth, on which she, the artist, had depicted his victim as a young girl, small, physically frail, internally damaged: she had taken for her model her memory of an idiot, and consequently innocent, child, Sufiya Zinobia Hyder.” (194)

In the novel, Sufiya Zinobia is also known with the name of ‘shame’ because only socially shameful roles have been assigned to her. Rushdie observes, “There was once a young woman, Sufiya Zinobia, also known as Shame” (197). She is represented as the being who finds it difficult to maintain proper coordination between her which makes her walking awkward. This proposition seems almost real because in real life also intellectually-deficient people stagger while walking. However, to call any person with disability as abnormal is highly objectionable. Sufiya Zinobia’s abnormal nature has again been highlighted, though there is no absolute measuring rod to calculate it. This nomenclature spoils the image of the disabled community as a whole. Even her mental capacity is time and again touched

upon as raw and random. Rushdie states, “She would not have struck a stranger as being particularly abnormal...She had only managed to get hold of around seven years’ worth of brains.” (197)

Sufiya Zinobia is also described as the devil to justify her fate with Omar Khayyam whose birth is thought to be devilish as hers. Rushdie states, “that she-devil and this child of she-devils” (198). Her personality is again described with repulsive terms and she is called ‘deranged daughter’. Rushdie states, “The image of his deranged daughter... Sufiya Zinobia at twenty-eight had advanced to a mental age of approximately nine and a half.” (218)

The multi-dimensional aspects of an individual’s personality are stigmatized when he/she fails to meet the culturally established norm. Kothari states that, “... dwarfism has also been legally recognized as a locomotor disability” (43). The people characterized by dwarfness are often looked at inquisitively. They often become the butt of ridicule in the social and domestic sphere as they receive different negative and nefarious nicknames from their society. To be dwarf or tall in size is a matter of difference that demands acceptance and accommodation. Such differences are in line with postmodern thinking which celebrates differences. However, in this novel, Sufiya and her grandmother become a laughing stock on account of their short stature. It is due to the exclusionary nature of the normality concept which is so universalizing and totalizing that it fails to take into account the dimensional differences. Salman Rushdie writes, “Sufiya Zinobia remained small when she grew up, taking after her near-midget paternal great-grandmother, whose name, Bariamma, Big Mother, had always been a sort of family joke.” (89)

Sufiya Zinobia is, time and again, described as an idiot in whose humiliation overflows, eventually. Rushdie Remarks, “But I prefer to believe that the wind was no more than a coincidence, an excuse; that what happened because twelve years of unloved humiliation take their toll, even on an idiot” (138). She is represented as a sleepwalker with the capacity of infecting anyone she passes by. As a somnambulist, she is projected to have killed hundreds of turkeys on account of her sleepwalking. In the aftermath of decapitation and evisceration of turkeys, she sleeps among the corpora snoring very gently. Sufiya is shown as a killer and brainless in terms of her actions. It is conveyed implicitly that people with disability are somehow detrimental to society and hence justify their exclusion which makes a negative impact difference in the lives of disabled people. The atmosphere of killing created around Sufiya Zinobia shocks every common reader. Moreover, her representation is streaked with blood that terrifies even her father and mother who are scared to approach her during the carnage scene. Rushdie observes:

Shahbanou would always say that it must have been quite a wind, it sent soldiers to keep at the gate and wrought a somnambulist miracle of such potency that Sufiya Zinobia’s passage through the house, into the garden and over the wall acquired the power of infecting anyone passed. (138)

Sufiya’s intellectual disability has been confirmed from time to time by exposing the gulf between her physical growth and mental capacity. Her cognitive competence lags behind her body growth. Rushdie remarks, “What forces moved that sleeping three-year-old mind in its twelve-year-old body to order an all-around assault upon feathered turkey-cocks and hens?” (139)

The fifth chapter of novel *Shame* has been entitled as “The Wrong Miracle” which directly refers to the birth of a disabled character, Sufiya Zinobia. Literally, the writer has employed a literary device of oxymoron which is a combination of two contradictory words placed side by side for causing a special effect. Perhaps oxymoron is deliberately used by the writer to restrict the imagination of the reader and his/her sensibility. The second interpretation of oxymoron ‘wrong miracle’ suggests that what could have been a miracle turns out to be disgusting. This oxymoron has been used for the disabled character of the novel Sufiya Zinobia which seems more an underrepresentation than the real one. Rushdie remarks, “Sufiya Zinobia is the ‘wrong miracle’ because father had wanted a boy” (107). This informs the young minds and fills up their minds with negativity in relation to people with disability. Rushdie comments, “The heroine of our story, the wrong miracle, Sufiya Zinobia, was small as small a baby as anyone had ever seen” (89). It is a fact that when two terms are employed closely for a very long time period, they are taken as one and the same thing which results in an understanding of one in terms of another and vice versa. It is also evidenced by literary devices like synecdoche and metonymy. Drawing on the effect of these literary terms, the birth of Sufiya Zinobia is understood as something wrong and mysterious. It seems a common practice to exaggerate the negative aspects of disabled people while the same doesn’t hold true for the non-disabled people. Some of their problems are real but some are definitely culturally constructed. Many calumniation are issued about their problem which vilifies the entire community.

The subjectivity of Sufiya Zinobia is limited to few things and blushing is one of them. Her blushing is overstated by the people around her in general and by every member of the family ranging from parents to maids in particular. Rushdie observes,

“O rubescent Sufiya Zinobia! It is possible that the above incident has been a little embellished during its many tellings and retellings, but I shall not be the one to question the veracity of oral tradition. They say the baby blushed at birth” (90). Her act of blushing has been exaggerated to the extent that it is compared with wildfire which is fearful incandescence. It has become problematic not only for her parents but also for all those having a distant relationship with her. For instance, Sufiya’s grandmother, Bariamma, claims to have felt burning sensation over lips while kissing Sufiya. Her blushing redness is more constructed than given. Rushdie states, “The ancient lady bent to kiss the girls and was alarmed to find that her lips had been mildly burned by a sudden rush of heat to Sufiya Zinobia’s cheek” (121). Raza Hyder’s maid, Miss Shahbanou overstates Sufiya’s reddishness saying that her bathing has raised the temperature of water to the boiling point. This is an example of sheer exaggeration and misrepresentation of Sufia’s subjectivity. Moreover, she is inflicted with psychological denial by projecting her as a ‘mutilated’ being. Rushdie observes:

Miss Shahbanou the Parsee ayah whom Bilquis had employed on her return to Karachi, complained on her first day that when gave Sufiya Zinobia a bath the water had scalded her hands, having been brought close to boiling point by a red flame of embarrassment that spread from the roots of the damaged girl’s hair to the tips of her curling toes. (121)

The blushing of Sufiya Zinobia is an extrinsically caused phenomenon. It is almost a common practice to look down upon the disabled people. The process of gazing disabled people makes them uncomfortable. It engenders among them irritation and exasperation of the highest order, which in turn amounts to harassment called ‘gaze harassment’. Rushdie remarks, “Sufiya Zinobia Hyder blushed

uncontrollably whenever her presence in the world was noticed by others” (122). In the novel, Sufiya becomes a victim of ‘gaze harassment’. She is looked at by Duniyad Begum in a way as if she is an alien. Bilquis, her mother, warns people about the inquisitive looks they cast on Sufiya Zinobia because she believes that somehow gazing is responsible for her blushing. Rushdie mentions, “That moron, Bilquis shouted beneath the amused gaze of Duniyad Begum and the rest, ‘just don’t even look at her now! What is this? Anyone puts eyes on her or tells her two words and she goes red, red like chilli! I swear.” (121)

It is a common belief that people with an intellectual disability like Sufiya Zinobia are not capable of analytical comprehension of the composition. They are considered helpless in understanding even the ordinary things around them from a social perspective. The same phenomenon holds true for Sufiya Zinobia as well. Rushdie Remarks, “See, how, growing, she caresses a pebble in her hand, unable to say why goodness seems to lie within this smooth flat stone” (121). Somehow, this notion about people with disability may be based on some solid grounds but such generalization might not hold good for all of them. Sufiya’s subjectivity has been limited to her oversensitivity to humiliation she faces. Her existence is questioned on account of disability that becomes the cause of her oversensitive nature. Irrespective of any correlation between her sensitivity and disability, this sort of representation is highly stigmatising because it becomes the basis for the formation of stereotypes in the light of which people with disability are later understood, appreciated or depreciated. Rushdie remarks, “The plague of shame spread rapidly through that tragic being whose chief defining characteristic was her sensitivity to the bacilli of humiliation.” (141)

Sufiya introspects herself saying that she possesses much better world within her where she can relish herself from her own perspective. She sometimes questions her subjectivity with the belief that bad things happen to her because of her displaced identity. She seems not to blame the outside world. Drawing on her imagination, she feels all such worst things and thoughts which make entry into her thought process during nights. These thoughts reverberate in her mind making her toss her head against the bed. Rushdie observes, “She feels the things that get inside her must be her own fault. If she were good the bad things go elsewhere, so that means she is not good.” (214)

Sufiya is indoctrinated by her mother Bilquis who tells her to consider herself as water body wherein to bring about the drowning of Omar Khayyam. Her marriage is not celebrated with great pomp and show as they did at Naveed’s marriage, making it joyless and guestless. They don’t inform any relatives letting only family members attend her marriage ceremony. The narrator states, “At Sufiya Zinobia’s wedding (a private affair; no guests, no marquees; the three mothers of Q. stayed away, Dawood absented himself also, leaving only Hyders, layers and Shakil)” (199). Sufiya Zinobia’s identity and individuality are confined to words like ‘beast’ and ‘wrong miracle’ which have been repeatedly used in the novel. She is not only known and described by these appellations, but she is also said to be an incarnation of disorder and shame. Rushdie remarks, “A beast is born, a ‘wrong miracle’, within the citadels of propriety and decorum” (200). It is often observed that the terms generally associated with disabled people are indiscriminately used for something else with which they have no connection. For instance, Maulana Dawood mistakes Pakistan for Arafat. This misunderstanding is termed as blindness which indirectly hits at the disabled community. Rushdie remarks, “The old man had chosen to believe that they

were about to land on the holy ground of the Arafat plain outside Mecca Sharif, well, that, too, was a kind of blindness.” (201)

Shahbanou convinces Sufiya that she cannot conceive and bear children but Sufiya wishes to become wife and mother in a real sense. She wants to share a bed with her husband but normal society symbolized by Shahbanou makes frequent interruptions to spoil her plan. The narrator adds that “Her husband does not come to her at night. Here are two things she does not like: that he does not come” (215). It advances the view that Sufiya Zinobia has been de-womanized, de-sexualised and de-motherised simultaneously. In other words, it proves Anita Ghai’s theorization that “epics equate disability with desexualization.” (65)

Sufiya Zinobia is shown as very affectionate to children which indicates her natural instinct to be a mother. This is also evidenced by the way she plays with her nephews and nieces. She observes their crawling and babbling and skips on a rope for them showing that she possesses all sentiments befitting a mother. However, on one pretext or another, she is not given chance to prove herself. This also happens in real life where disabled women are hardly considered worthy of marriage and even if they are asked to marry, they are hardly permitted to become mothers. Rushdie states, “She, Sufiya, plays with them as often as she can. She likes watching them crawl, fall over, make funny noises, likes knowing more than them. She skips for them” (214). She is wise enough to infer that Shahbanou has temptingly stolen her husband and a baby. This competence of understanding puts a question mark against the misrepresentation of Sufiya Zinobia as mentally retarded and deranged. Rushdie remarks, “Because he didn’t give me the baby she took it inside her instead.” (219)

People with disability face crisis with respect to their wholeness which is believed incomplete, imbalanced and asymmetrical. Substantiating the statement, it is relevant to draw on the Sufiya Zinobia's description. Omar Khayyam, Sufiya's husband, even accepts her imperfection as true and holds destiny responsible for it. The same notion prevails almost across all societies resulting in their social exclusion. Rushdie remarks, "So that the girl whose fate had prevented her from becoming complete had finally diminished to the vanishing point." (242)

Sufiya Zinobia's violent behaviour is the resultant of the age-old practice of calling her a 'wrong miracle' and 'shame'. Frequent stigmatization of Sufiya Zinobia is the real injustice with her. It is this constant extremism that seems to have unleashed the imprisoned beast inside her. Rushdie states, "What seems certain is that Sufiya Zinobia, for so long burdened with being a miracle-gone-wrong, a family's shame made flesh, had discovered in the labyrinths of her unconscious self the hidden path that links *sharam* to violence" (139). Her blushing is repeatedly referred across the novel with negative connotations. Her redness might have been caused by the cumulative effects of blowing of hot air and humiliation she faced for twelve years with unloving parents and sister.

The gender identity of people with disability makes a huge impact on their lives. Although disability stigmatizes male and female both, the males are still better placed in society. It is also seen that the birth of a male disabled baby is not considered as big a stigma as the birth of a female disabled baby. The disabled woman is doubly marginalized- one on account of their disability and second because of her sex. Nilika Mehrotra observes, "Intellectually disabled women face double discrimination—the stigma of the intellectual impairment combines with rigid

stereotypes of femininity to exacerbate their life situation” (142). Extending gender theorization to Sufiya Zinobia, she experiences the same at the hands of society. The disabled character, Sufiya Zinobia, is an unwanted child as her father wished to have a son instead of a daughter. Rushdie mentions, “He wanted a hero of a son; I gave him an idiot female instead” (101). Therefore, the birth of Sufiya has filled every nook and corner of the hospital room with disappointing silence. Her birth has gagged every mouth in general and her parents in particular. This gloomy atmosphere is because of Sufiya’s gender. Rushdie remarks, “A daughter, Major Sahib, and so beautiful, like the day, don’t you think so? In the delivery room, silence flooded from the pores of the exhausted mother; in the anteroom, Raza was quiet, too. Silence” (89). The birth of Sufiya seems to have beaten her father, Raza Hyder. Rushdie remarks, “Defeat? But this was Old Razor Guts himself, conqueror of glaciers, vanquisher of frosty meadows and ice-fleeced mountain sheep! Was the future strong man of the nation so easily crushed? (Rushdie). The magnitude of the news of the birth of a female child proves so disappointing for him that the writer has used the term bombshell to express Raza’s grief and gloominess. Rushdie mentions, “Did the midwife’s bombshell lead to unconditional surrender? (89). Moreover, he starts disagreeing with everyone with regard to Sufiya Zinobiya’s gender. This news is so depressing to him that he falsifies every claim of the hospital staff about his daughter’s birth. Rushdie writes, “Raza began to argue; the words came in rushes, inexorable as tanks” (89). Gender of an individual matters a lot for people, though everyone speaks about the equality of both sexes. These pronouncements are all theoretically valued, promoted and propagated but in practice, people are hell-bent to have male children. Raza Hyder, a great Army Major, represents the society where female children are not treated with equality. Shocked to hear the news, he sought the help of the hospital supervisor to get the

gender of his child confirmed. Rushdie remarks, “And blasted from his lips like cannonballs: Genitalia! Can! Be! Obscured!” (89). Hope is associated with male sex and hopelessness with female children. However, Raza’s hope of bearing a son is murdered by the supervisor’s weighty and final words. The supervisor outranks Raza Hyder, by virtue of which Raza Hyder has to accept his decision as final. Rushdie remarks, “The stillborn son died again, even his ghost snuffed out by the medico’s fatal speech: No possibility of error. Please do note that the child has been washed. Prior to swaddling procedure, matter of sex is beyond dispute” (90). Though he has been told repeatedly by the authentic hospital staff about the sexual identity of his child, he doubts them all including his senior supervisor trying on his own to get confirmation about the sex of his child. Putting all the pronouncements aside, Raza Hyder himself strip away Sufiya Zinobia’s covering stuff and pokes his fingers to confirm the sexual identity of his child. Rushdie remarks:

But what father would allow his son, twice-conceived, to be executed thus, without a fight? Raza tore away swaddling cloth; having penetrated to the baby within, he jabbed at its nether zones. There I ask you, sir, what is that? We see here the expected configuration, also the not uncommon post-natal swelling, of the female. (90)

Elsewhere in the novel, Sufiya Zinobia is illustrated as the ‘wrong miracle’ because of her gender and disability. Rushdie remarks, “Sufiya Zinobia is the ‘wrong miracle’ because father had wanted a boy” (107). Raza Hyder is so overwhelmed by gender bias that he raises questions over swelling of its child’s flesh thinking it as a child’s genitalia. Rushdie remarks, “A bump! Raza shrieked hopelessly. Is it not, doctor, an absolute and unquestionable bump?” (90). When medical discourses fail to persuade him, he is persuaded with a religious discourse to admit the will of almighty

regarding the sexual identity of his daughter, Sufiya Zinobia. Rushdie observes, “When her parents had to admit the immutability of her gender, to submit, as faith demands, to God” (90). The longing for a son instead of a daughter has been expressed repeatedly at many places in the novel. Rushdie remarks, “Meanwhile, two wives are abandoned in their separate exiles, each with a daughter who should have been a son” (104). In a conservative society, it is not only disabled character who faces problems on account of her gender but normal characters also regret their female identity. Although disabled woman suffers doubly by virtue of her gender and disability, a non-disabled woman experiences the pain of being considered a second-rate human. It finds expression in Arjumand Harappa’s character who complains against her gender, vehemently. Rushdie observes, “Arjumand regretted her female sex for wholly non-parental reasons. ‘This woman’s body,’ she told her father on the day she became a grown woman, ‘it brings a person nothing but babies, pinches and shame” (107). Sufiya Zinobia’s is directly blamed by her father who is hell-bent on having a male child. Her birth is marked as a mistake and is chastised in comparison to the birth of non-disabled Naveed who is nicknamed as ‘Good News’ and is glorified as a model child. This projects that Sofiya Zinobia is blamed for her gender and disability. Rushdie remarks, “Another daughter, but he hasn’t complained about that either, saying only that it is quite proper that the first should be a boy and the second a girl, so one must not blame the new arrival for her elder sister’s mistake” (111). Nilika Mehrotra states that disabled women are doubly discriminated on account of traditional gender roles and disability. Moreover, disability movement is dominated by issues of men and ignores issues of women such as sexuality and motherhood. (160)

Most often, people with disability are deprived of the love necessary for the emotional development of an individual. Instead of affection and love, they are abused and cursed. The love and lovely hugs are mostly reserved for non-disabled children, restricting the same for disabled people. This theorisation may be substantiated with the way Sufiya Zinobia is treated and dealt with by her parents, Bilquis and Raza Hyder. She often feels that the offensive words falling upon her ears are making her life miserable. Her parents are more affectionate to Naveed who is the centre of their love, pushing Sufiya Zinobia towards margins of loveless life that brings about her spiritual dryness. Rushdie states, “Groans, insults, even the wild blows of exasperation rained on her instead; but such rain yields no moisture. Her spirit parched for lack of affection, she nevertheless managed, when love was in her vicinity, to glow happily just to be near the precious thing” (121). Disabled children like non-disabled derive ample pleasure out of loving and caring words which bring glow and charm on their faces. They are constantly discriminated by their parents, siblings and the public in general. Their desire to seek happiness is not respected as they are denied the opportunities for economic, political, social and emotional development, leaving them deficient in happiness index. Rushdie Observes:

How she glows with pleasure when she hears loving words, even though they are almost always meant for someone else. Bilquis poured all her affection over her younger daughter, Naveed. ‘Good News’- the nickname had stuck, like a pulled face in the wind- was soaked in it, a monsoon of love, while Sufiya Zinobia, her parents’ burden, her mother’s shame, remained as dry as the desert. (121)

The insensitive approach to treat people with disability both within the home and outside the home is abysmally pathetic. They suffer at the hands of family

members who, at times, hurt them psychologically by passing comments and remarks over them. This inhuman treatment towards the disabled community is the major issue that is being analysed through the present research. Substantiating the stand, it is required to locate disabled character Sufiya Zinobia in the context of the plot of the novel. She becomes the scapegoat for the anger Naveed attempts to smack at ayah, Shahbanou. Naveed makes fun of Sufiya's incapacities like wetting and blushes. She also questions Sufiya's thinking capacity by comparing her with a turnip. Yelling at her being unfit for marriage, she holds Sufiya Zinobia responsible for her delayed marriage. Rushdie states, "Look at you. Who would marry you with that hair, even if you had a brain? Turnip. Beetroot. Angrez radish. See how you make trouble for me with your tearing. Elder sister should marry first but who will come for her, ayah?" (136)

The novel substantiates the idea that parental attitude is also responsible for the victimization of disabled children by others. Disabled babies are sometimes cursed while non-disabled are celebrated for the similar nature of the activities. For example, Sufiya Zinobia isn't involved in any of the scandals Naveed enjoyed. Even then, Sufiya is said to symbolise shame and the offender Naveed is exalted as an angel. Naveed is not reprimanded or scolded and is accepted as such. All this flexibility and delicacy of mood is reserved for the non-disabled child and everything otherwise is meant for the disabled daughter. Rushdie beautifully represents that had Sufiya been as scandalous as her sister Naveed, the parents would have skinned her off. This brings to the surface as to how parents discriminate against children on account of disability. Rushdie observes, "Imagine, Omar Khayyam would think in later years if that marriage scandal had happened to Sufiya Zinobia! They would have cut her skin off and sent it to the *dhobi*." (137)

People with disability generally face indifference on the part of their parents, siblings and the rest of the family members. It is explicit from the treatment extended to Sufiya Zinobia. She is ignored by her mother and sister at the time she needs them the most. She is taken care of by ayah Shahbanou who gives her cold compresses to step down her fever. However, her mother, Bilquis, avoids her as if there is no relationship between them. Instead of lending sympathy, her sister Naveed taunts and teases her with expressions like 'mental case'. Rushdie observes, "You Parsees, Good News told Shahbanou, 'you have got a soft spot for mental cases, seems to me...Bilquis showed no interest in the application of compresses'" (140). As an aftermath of fever, Sufiya is in deplorable condition. Her body has begun to produce strange changes, ranging from discoloured inflammation to overflowing of her mouth. She has been pictured as if she is the repertoire of all diseases. Indeed, she is intellectually disabled, but her use as the site for the execution of magic realism worsens her already stigmatised image. Rushdie remarks:

It had started to come out in huge blotchy rashes, red and purple with small hard pimples in the middle; boils were forming between her toes and her back was bubbling up into extraordinary vermilion lumps. Sufiya Zinobia was over-salivating; great gets of spittle flew out through her lips. Appalling black buboes were forming in her armpits. (140)

Defining a person in the light of another person or the benchmark set by others is complete injustice with the person to be defined. This proposition holds absolutely true when it comes to delineating people with disability. They are often contrasted and compared with non-disabled people, ignoring their essential difference in terms of structure and thinking. For instance, Sufiya Zinobia is juxtaposed with her sister

Naveed, making room for her description as stupid, goof, idiot and what not. Rushdie Observes:

Sufiya the moron blushed. Her mother said to the assembled relatives, 'She does it to get attention. O, you don't know what it is like, the mess, the anguish, and for what? For no reward. For air. Thank God for my Good News.' But goof or no goof, Sufiya Zinobia revealed to watching family eyes that something was piling up between those two. Yes. Idiots can feel such things that are all. (123)

People, in general, believe non-disabled people as the benchmark to gauge the degree of deviation in an individual. The higher the deviation, the more degree of disability it means. The inclusive and accommodative standards are yet to be designed to encompass diverse human differences. Therefore, there is an exigency of extending normality spectrum to imbibe differences between different people because differences outnumber the commonalities. Disabled people are often defined against non-disabled people instead, of defining them in their own light. The blunder of comparing and contrasting of disabled and non-disabled is even committed by the writers of eminence. This huge generalisation can be substantiated by taking a cursory look upon the comparative description of Sufiya Zinobia and Naveed where Sufiya's deviation as a disabled has been defined against Naveed's capacities as a normal being. Sufiya, a dwarf, is shown to possess features of ridiculing nature which includes her slowness, silence and shamefulness, while as Naveed is represented agile, angelic and tall. Rushdie remarks:

What contrasts in these girls! Sufiya Zinobia, embarrassingly small and Good News rangy, elongated. Sufiya and Naveed, shame and good news: the one

slow and silent, the other quick with her noise. Good News would stare brazenly at her elders; Sufiya averted her eyes. But Naveed Hyder was her mother's little angel, she got away with everything. (137)

M. H. Abrams mentions that the term 'Magic Realism' is applied to the works of John Fowles and Salman Rushdie in England. He observes, "These writers weave, in an everlasting pattern, a sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from myth and fairy tales" (258). Moreover, Maggie Ann Bowers states that magic in 'magical realism' involves extraordinary occurrences which encompass ghosts, miracles, strange atmosphere and exceptional talents. Magic-shows bring about the illusion that something exceptional has happened while in magical realism "it is assumed that something extraordinary really has happened" (19). Drawing on such theorization, it becomes explicit that Salman Rushdie's novel, *Shame*, has employed magical realism technique. In the novel, many characters both disabled and non-disabled, are depicted to bring the desired effect of magic realism though not a single non-disabled character is shown as possessed. The disabled character, Sufiya Zinobia, is portrayed as possessed. In the novel, the technique of Magic Realism permits fusion of real and fiction. The novelist makes use of the disabled character as an axis to spin over. It has not been done to give space and voice to the disabled people, rather the novel is again a story of biased characters guided by irrational stereotypes. Therefore, it seems impossible that something positive will even come out from non-disabled writers regarding the disabled community. For example, Sufiya Zinobia, a disabled character, is depicted as haunted who has turned first into a spectre and then into an idiot. Rushdie remarks, "But finally she eluded me, she became a ghost. Anna, deported, repatriated to a country she had never seen, caught

brain-fever and turned into a sort of idiot” (116). She is again shown possessed with the spirit of an Asian girl who has been attacked during the night by white boys. Last but not least, she possesses the soul of a boy who has been burnt to death. Rushdie remarks, “But, she, too, is inside my Sufiya Zinobia now, and you will recognize her when she pops out. The last ghost inside my heroine is male, a boy from a news clipping” (117). She is even represented as animal walking on all her fours causing her limb skin stiffened. She is described with features like knotted hair and scratching of bushes, which are characteristics of animals. The process of bringing forth such depiction of disabled people make their identity more problematic. Rushdie observes, “On all fours, the calluses thick on her palms and soles. The black hair, once shorn by Bilquis Hyder, long now and matted around her face.” (254)

The writer, Salman Rushdie, employs the technique of magic realism in the novel, *Shame*, where he mixes real and fictional very skillfully. Sufiya Zinobia is used as the site where the magical and real contest and coincide with each other. The question arises as to why he has chosen a disabled character like Sufiya Zinobia for execution of magic realism technique and why not the non-disabled characters like Naveed. The writer takes the liberty to make fun of Sufiya Zinobia by applying the technique of magic realism. Ridiculous comments of the characters humiliate her in public, leaving no sense of self-respect for her to cherish. Everyone is activated in order to control Sufiya Zinobia as if she is a demon. To calm her completely, her head is shaven off and she is made completely bald. Rushdie utters, “Bilquis grabbed hold of great clumps of her daughter’s savaged tresses, and cut...Sufiya Zinobia’s head looked like a cornfield after a fire.” (140)

Drawing on the technique of magic realism, Sufiya Zinobia is sometimes depicted as possessed and many times shown as wildish. Her possessed nature is

believed to be demon-driven which occupies her soul and turns her violent. Being possessed, she holds Captain Talvar Ulhaq by the head at his marriage with her sister Naveed and tries to rip his head off as she did with turkeys long before. The grip is so tight that many family members struggle to pull her apart. Here, she is represented cannibalistic because she bites at his neck, carrying some pound of flesh away from it. Therefore, showing Sufiya Zinobia as human guillotine becomes quite problematic from a disability point of view. The way magic realism technique has made her behave in the plot of the novel seems very unnatural. The problem is not with the technique but it lies in employing a disabled like Sufiya Zinobia to execute the magic realism because they are already marginalized and the type of action expected from them in magic realism will definitely render a negative image about them. Rushdie observes, “The combined efforts of the five desperate people succeeded in detaching Sufiya Zinobia’s hands before Talvar Ulhaq’s head was ripped off like a turkey’s; but then she buried her teeth in his neck, giving him a second scar to balance that famous love-bite.” (171)

The use of magic realism technique gives liberty to the writer to mingle and mix fact and fiction to any extent, authorising the author to make a beast of the human and vice versa. Drawing on the technique of magic realism, Sufiya Zinobia is portrayed as a supernatural being possessed by a beast or monster. In other words, she is shown two in one—human in form and beast in action. This duality dilutes her human identity and gives birth to some different identity which is difficult to define. In the novel, it is very difficult for the writer to balance the two beings. Many a times, the writer tends to explore the beast image that flushes out Sufiya’s real selfhood and essence, completely. Even the writer uses words like ‘other-than-beastly part’ to speak about her compound constitution of human and non-human. Rushdie states,

“Appearances notwithstanding, however, this Sufiya Zinobia turned out to be, in reality, one of those supernatural beings.” (197)

Drawing on magic realism technique, Sufiya Zinobia is made a carrier for its execution. She is again shown possessed by a beast which forces her to sleep with four boys and later makes her rip off their heads. She is described as insomniac that turns her into a sleepwalker and it is during sleepwalking state that she plays havoc with life. Even her father Raza Hyder accepts her beastliness because Maulana Dawood confirms the entry of devil into Sufiya’s body. This is incredible but magic realism makes it possible. Rushdie remarks, “But I believe she had intercourse with the four young *goondas* before tearing off their heads.” (218)

Sufiya is shown aggressive against her husband to the extent that she tries to strangle him almost to death by making use of magic realism. When she is alone and un-possessed, she follows the commands of her husband very obsequiously. But the moment devil occupies her in accordance with magic realism, she attacks Omar Khayyam, severely. This brings to the surface that intellect-deficient people may behave awkwardly but not as awkwardly as shown through the application of magic realism. The exploitation of Sufiya for the execution of magic realism will be right for a student of literature but a disability scholar would definitely not appreciate this selective usage of disabled for materialization of this technique. Rushdie remarks, “She leapt from the bed and came at him with her hands stuck out like hooks.” (236)

Sometimes, writers resort to the mistake of rebuking corrupt people with labels like mad or with many such stigmatizing labels which are generally used for disabled people. This association of corruption with disability further affects disability discourse. It advances the view that disabled people carry ample wickedness with

which anything bad can be compared. Rushdie remarks, “The customs officer at the border post was mad and his shameless daughter was willing to turn a blind eye in return for regular gratuities” (99). The customs officer is a normal man but the label ‘blind’ is used for his embezzlement at the border while doing import-export exchange of goods, though it has no link with a disability. It can be inferred from the statement that disabled people are blamed for the uncommitted acts of their own and offensive acts of normal people. This is altogether an injustice with the disabled community because they are linguistically blamed for even those actions which they are not capable to perform. The moment a normal person fails to perform according to his capacity, he is scolded as blind, mad, deaf and dumb. Moreover, writers also make use of phrases which speak negativity about disability. For example, the phrases like ‘turn a deaf ear’ and ‘turn a blind eye’ signify the essential negativity associated with disability. It is really a strange issue to be highlighted. Rushdie observes, “Not a woman to turn a deaf ear to public slanders” (109). Moreover, the terms reserved for disability have become an essential part of almost every language. This usage creates a negative impression of visually challenged or hearing impaired persons. Rushdie observes, “Goodbye, Iskander, she told him, ‘and do not forget that the love of some women is not blind” (111). Therefore, there is a need for linguistic studies to suggest expunging of such phraseology that stigmatizes and disgraces the people with disability.

Focusing on empowerment of disabled women, they appear the most powerless among womenfolk. They are not given chance to execute their individual will even to decide their marriages or professional careers. They are made to understand that all that is being done is for their welfare. Sufiya Zinobia is engaged to an old man in the name of marriage which is based on mutual consent of both

partners. Rushdie remarks, “She even had a husband, Omar Khayyam Shakil, and never complained that her parents had chosen for her a man fully thirty-one years her senior.” (197)

The positive aspects of the personality of disabled people are generally ignored while identifying them through their disability only. For instance, a person with some intellectual deficiency is not permitted to express his/her sexual orientation or choice. Generally, it is believed that disability of one type means disability of an entire range of capabilities and identities of an individual, though it doesn't hold good in general. Take the case of Stephen Hawking who begot children despite his intellectual disability. It proves that the disability of one area cannot affect and deplete any other identity. Same is the case with Sufiya Zinobia, who, although married, is not allowed to consummate her marriage. As her sexual desires are not taken care of, she is never privileged to enjoy her married life, rather she is cheated by her husband and ayah, Shahbanou in the name of solicitude. Rushdie remarks, “She was his wife but she was not his wife...That night he recognized Shahbanou's knock on his bedroom door” (210). Sufiya has been shown very agile in terms of her audibility. This statement again proves that disability of one sense doesn't mean uselessness of other attributes of human personality, rather disability of one sense may imply swiftness of other senses. She pretends to have slept outstretching her limbs in a relaxed mood to assure Shahbanou about her sleeping state. She is very skilled in breathing and gliding as one normally does while sleeping. She listens to heaving, breathing and bellowing of Shahbanou while she is sleeping with Omar Khayyam. Rushdie remarks, “After some time she hears Shahbanou rise from her mat, slip out of the room, go a few steps down the passage, knock. Insomnia sharpens the ears. She hears bed-springs his exhalations, her bony cries” (212). Sufiya Zinobia's sense of

touch is projected as swift as her sense of audibility. Doubting Shahbanou's character, she examines bed sheets of her husband and senses some moisture there which confirms her doubt. Rushdie observes, "She felt the sheets with her hands, found damp patches." (213)

In the novel, Sufiya Zinobia is shown contemplating about the way her parents behave with her. This gives birth to the possibility that people with disability do think with a difference which may or may not conform to non-disabled thinking. She creatively imagines about things and toys lying which she likes to play with in isolation. She can be introvert with respect to her thinking but she does think. She reflects upon the hugs, smiles and shouts of her father along with skipping of the mother. Rushdie observes, "One of the best inside-things is when her father picks her up...There is a thing she has inside that has never happened anywhere else: her mother skips with her." (213)

The writer has also raised the issue of Special Education which may help the people with disability, professionally. Special teachers are trained in handling the concerns of disabled people. Therefore, it is imperative to involve more and more of them in teaching and training of people with disability. Sufiya Zinobia gets delighted to meet her special teacher because she attends her needs and concerns. Rushdie remarks, "A special teacher comes most days and she likes that. She, the teacher, brings new things and Sufiya Zinobia puts some of these inside her head as well" (213). The way she is shown thinking really surprises the readers. Examining the world, Sufiya Zinobia finds herself existing nowhere, though the world is very huge in size and diversity. She feels that the world has never attended her issues as per her expectations, rather it makes feeble reactions and responses to her stimuli. In reality,

people with disability face the same marginalization across the global society. Their emerging issues and concerns are not attended up to their satisfaction as they are still considered as useless and burdensome. The world-renowned disabled figures like Stephen Hawking and Albert Einstein interrogated the stereotypical notions affecting the psyche of the people, and proved that if one fails to appreciate diversity caused by physical/mental deficiency, the fault lies with the so-called 'abled' people who don't have the ability cherish and sustain their sensitivity towards their fellow humans. Rushdie remarks, "She knows the world is really a picture of a much bigger place called everywhere but it isn't good picture because she cannot see herself in it, even with a magnifying glass." (213)

The stereotypes don't even allow the disabled women to have the privilege to become mothers on grounds of their disability. Although Sufiya Zinobia is married, she is thought neither fit for consummation nor for conceiving which deprives her of the natural right of motherhood. This is again a question of an attack on her subjectivity by the insensitive members of the family. Seeking the answer to the question, "what does that mean to have a husband", she is told by Shahbanou that husbands are meant for money only without educating her with any further explanation. She is given to understand by the statement of Shahbanou that blushing and internal burning of her body might be the reason for her incapacity to conceive. Although her suffering evolves from bad to worse, it is not noticed by anyone and it intensifies her pain. This is the biggest tragedy because no one even attempts to understand her pain. Rushdie observes:

Husbands are for money and babies. But don't worry, bibi, money is no problem and babies aren't for you. She cannot understand this, no matter how

often the picture plays. If money is no problem you shouldn't need husbands for it. And babies aren't for you. Why? 'just, I say so.' But why?...why why-why away you fly. (214)

In general, people believe that visits to shrines, tombs and other religious places are very efficacious to treat the diseases, disorders and disabilities. This issue has been highlighted in the novel where people with visual deficiency begin to see and people with limping problem start walking uprightly on touching the tomb of Iskander Harrapa. This supernatural practice of treatment is very common in Indian subcontinent where people with disability are taken to religious places instead of hospitals for their treatment. Rushdie observes, "And then blind men seeing, the lame walking, lepers cured when they touched the martyr's tomb. It was also said that this tomb touching was a particularly efficacious remedy for disorders of teeth." (238)

Sufiya Zinobia has performed different and unique activities to pass her leisure time as do the non-disabled people, but her actions are often termed as the symptoms of lunacy. Abled people don't appreciate the different habits of doing things. Rushdie remarks, "Like Omar Khayyam Shakil, President Raza Hyder began to shell and eat large quantities of pine-kernels, Sufiya Zinobia's favourite treat, which she had spent long and happy hours releasing from their shells, with crazy dedication, because the shelling of pine-kernels is a form of lunacy." (245)

Sufiya Zinobia is delineated as possessed by a beast across the novel, showing her as a detrimental woman. She is shown as a human hunter. She summons up her courage to scour all her foes like her husband, Omar Khayyam, who has drugged and chained her and even her parents who have considered her as a 'shame'. It is obvious to infer that she has been represented as an alien in the family. Rushdie states, "It was

a sign of Raza's declining power that the two newspapers felt able to run stories hinting that the president's daughter was a dangerous madwoman." (260)

People with disability in general and, in particular, women suffer in terms of marital status. First, they hardly get any offer of marriage. Even if some disabled man or woman receives an offer of marriage, the partner will be either disabled or old enough not to be thought fit for marriage. Hardly any non-disabled person becomes ready to accept them as their life partners. The same situation has been portrayed in the novel, *Shame*, where Sufiya Zinobia's disabled identity intervenes between her and her married life. There is none to propose her for marriage except a doctor, Omar Khayyam Shakil who is of her father's age. Rushdie states, "Omar Khayyam finally screwed up the courage to ask for Sufiya Zinobia's hand when he heard about the betrothal of her younger sister" (159). Even her parents support her marriage with an old man. They start justifying the match on the grounds of Sufiya's mental disability. They have generated argument after argument to rationalize their act of getting their daughter married with Omar Khayyam Shakil despite his old-age and debauched past life. Bilquis Hyder, her mother, seeks to rid of Sufiya whom she considers as bothersome and annoying. Therefore, she attempts to persuade her husband for her marriage, saying that she is no longer stupid and can wear and sleep without any wetting. She has improved herself linguistically. She overcomes the blushing act by making no more killing attempts. Rushdie remarks, "Instead she said, 'where are we going to find the girl a better match?'" (161). Raza Hyder first expresses concern over her marriage because of intellectual condition but later he, too, changes his perception, believing that the marriage will be balanced one because one lacks intellect and the second is deficient of prime youth. Although he can't express it explicitly, his silence and questioning imply the same thing. Rushdie remarks, "The

realisation that there was a kind of symmetry here, a sort of fair exchange, weakened his resolve so that Bilquis detected the uncertainty in his voice when he asked, 'but a damaged child: should we look for husbands at all?' (161). Although Raza Hyder is very indifferent to Sufiya on account of her gender, gradually, he shuns his patriarchal attitude and begins to love her as affectionately as he should as a father. He begins to play with her. However, the disgusting phrases like 'retarded child' and 'damaged child' are constantly brought into play to address her. Rushdie states, "In short, Hyder had changed his opinion of his retarded child...but a damaged child." (161)

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