

## Conclusion

The present research work applies human rights approach to study the problematics of human rights. The study has specifically focused on the subcultures in Indian context i.e. Dalits, Third Gender and Persons with Disabilities as portrayed in Indian Fiction in English and English translation. To investigate and understand the corpus of human rights problems in literature, the study has forged an eclectic mix of close textual reading and discursive and contextual decoding as a methodological strategy. In other words, this has been an attempt to explore the interconnections between the textual and contextual in order to understand the discursive formations emanating out of the fictional reality and realist activism.

The introductory part of the research deals with the title of the research and helps to understand genealogy of the phrase 'Human Rights' from natural law theory to modern human rights and current human rights practices. Acclaimed author Salman Rushdie, in a lecture at Emory University, says that the idea of human rights came out of the natural instinct of human beings i.e. 'liberty instinct'. These rights involve neither liberal nor Western fictions but rather connect to our deepest needs as human beings. The main objective of the present research is to establish symbiosis of human rights and literature. The genre of literature that is universally fixated on the theme of law as menace has the potential in some transcendent way to humanize the legal system as well. The book, *Literature and Human Rights-The Law, the Language and the Limitations of Human Rights Discourse* edited by Ian Ward emphatically posits that study of 'literature and human rights' is a cross disciplinary research. It describes that lawyers facing legal

dilemmas get assistance in literature and for literature scholars the engagement of legal texts helps to enrich myriad areas of literary criticism. This research demonstrates a methodology to interpret and deconstruct the human wrongs through rhetorical and critical analysis of literature. It also highlights the dire need of human rights in the global era where gross violation of human rights at international as well as national level is taking place.

It explores that literature reflects and affects the human psyche as it mirrors our beliefs and challenges. It has been used deliberately to normalize groups of individuals and create social change and solidarity with them. For example, one of the effects of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Stowe was to make people aware of the negative issues in slavery. Salman Rushdie, in his novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), highlights the social inequality among Hindus. It also depicts as to how these lower caste men are not allowed to fetch water from the common well of the village. *Children of A Better God* (2010) by Susmita Bagchi brings out the agonies and pains, and threats and challenges of people suffering from cerebral palsy. This book is also a tribute to the loving caregivers of such individuals who work behind them and with them so as to enable them to lead respectable independent lives as much as possible. *The Bone Collector* (1999) by Jeffery Deaver was written not only as a thriller mystery, but also as a statement against mercy killing. The movie *Guzaarish* (2010) portrays the character of Ethan Mascarenhas (Hrithik Roshan), who becomes a paraplegic and files a petition in court for mercy killing. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee, masterfully uses this fear and distrust of those who are different. She uses narrow-minded townspeople to connect with what may be the reader's own narrow views of developmentally disabled individuals. The character of Boo, is

presented as dangerous when seen only from the townspeople's parochial viewpoint. In the end, he is revealed as both compassionate and brave. Pinki Virani's *Bitter Chocolate: Child Sexual Abuse in India* (2000) touches the most untouched issue of child sexual abuse through three cycles- Victim Cycle, Survivor Cycle and Exit Cycle. At the end of the book, there is a list of agencies all over India which help in CSA cases by providing help and counselling. In this way, literature reflects our realities, dreams and human rights concerns. Literary critic, Parmod K. Nayer in his book *Human rights and Literature* (2016), says that literature not only documents the basic human aspirations of happiness, security and hope but also depicts the limitations and the violations of these aspirations. It tells us what is good and bad and what does not fit into the cultural ideal. In this way, the idea of human rights has increasingly been playing a very important part in our contemporary life, the political in particular and the cultural in general. That is why Dr. Griffin, in his book *Beyond Anarchy and Plutocracy*, includes a chapter on human rights for the need of global democracy. He is of the view that democratic government needs the notion of human rights as at least one of its starting points and it will inspire a movement for global democracy. In turn, the full implementation of human rights relies on global democratic government. He also mentions several obstacles to realize the idea of human rights. As we all know that human rights express the utopian hope for an egalitarian society but this hope is hijacked in true sense when we come across the instances of discrimination against subaltern groups and violation of their human rights in every sphere of life. The plight of 'trans genders', Dalits, differently-abled, women, tribals, children and other disadvantaged sections of society may be observed in real life and literature, even today. For instance, the people with disabilities were not even

counted in census till 1995. Today, the sheer lack of sensitivity among masses towards these people is a matter of serious concern.

The first chapter explores the historical journey of 'untouchables' to 'Dalits'. It also depicts the three-fold oppression of dalit women through the autobiographies, *The Outcaste* by Sharan Kumar Limbale and *Karukku* by Bama. It also presents that ultimately their suppression emerges out of their subjugated state to break all shackles that have kept them in chains since ages. It also touches the phenomenon of conversion among Dalits which is just like jump from sky into frying pan. It also highlights that with the growth of capitalism in India, castes are changing into classes as today we can see the personalities like Tina Dabi who topped the IAS exam which is considered the most difficult exam of India. It shows that opportunities eradicate the differences. Both the autobiographies under study also depict that dalit protest proved to be weapon of emancipation. However, both Sharan Kumar Limbale and Bama suffered a lot, but due to their persistence they emerge as dalit writers and activists to pen down their agony and to establish dalit aesthetics. The chapter also delineates the need of sensitizing the Dalit community for non-cooperation with all untouchability practices, including both vertical and horizontal discrimination, and any other form of caste-discrimination. It also urges to address the issue of untouchability as a priority at global level and also the ideological change which comes through westernization and secularization of Indian masses. The Human Rights Perspective to Dalit literary representation and caste based discrimination defends the public opinion against untouchability.

The second chapter claims that the images we see in popular culture influence our habits of seeing both ourselves and others because contemporary life has become fluid.

Hence an absence of representation and inaccurate representation develops stereotypes and biased notion to convey messages about the acceptability of particular identities and the unacceptability of others. Through repetition, these distinctions have become naturalized. In this context, Human rights activist, Upendra Baxi, *In Exploring the Relationship between Human Rights, Globalization and Markets* (2002), argues that human suffering needs to be commodified and packaged according to market requirements for human rights entrepreneurs to flourish.

The self- narratives *A Truth About Me* by A. Revathi and *Me Laxmi Me Hijra* by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi depict that they are somehow psychologically different from normal people and are rendered as not just different but damaged and deviant as well. These two autobiographies not only mirror 'Third Gender' revolt against the rigid tradition and conventions, but also reflect the prevailing postmodernist thought as an impetus behind such convictions. Even the comprehensive document of landmark Supreme Court judgment pronounced on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 records the predicament of Laxmi Naryan Tripathi, a 'hijra' applicant born as male but feminine in her ways. But there are certain ambiguities in the judgment and it upholds the colonial provisions of section 377 of IPC which criminalises the carnal intercourse against the order of nature. But it seems funny to note that if one can determine his /her gender, why the same person cannot determine his /her sexual orientation. Still the recognition of transgender as 'Third Gender' sheds positive vibes and aspires to improve their plight at social, medical, economic and political level. It has opened the opportunities for them to get education as well as employment and to engage with a new identity through media portrayals.

The Third chapter starts with a logical plea to think and rethink disability. It establishes Disability Studies at crossroads. It has become an exciting interdisciplinary field of inquiry that expands the understanding of disability from a health science perspective to consider it as a civil and human rights issue, a minority identity, a sociological formation, an historic community, a diversity group, and a category of critical analysis in culture and the arts. The medical model looks at disability as a defect or sickness which has to be cured through medical intervention. It regards disabled people as bodies that are damaged, broken and unable to match or fit the Norm of 'ideal' body type. Thus, the medical model regards the body of a person with disabilities as pathological. The 'cultural model' or 'moral model' of disability views an impaired body as the result of sins or misdeeds in the present or a previous life, as a consequence of either one's own misdeeds or those of close relatives, particularly of the mother. But it is historically the oldest illogical model. As Amir Khan in his show 'Satyamev Jayate' argued that India is polio free country at present but does it signify that people are not committing crime. However, there are still many cultures like Greek, China, Africa and Europe that associate disability with sin, shame and guilt even if these are not overtly based on religious doctrine. The charity or welfare model of disability views the person with disabilities as the problem and dependent on the sympathy of others and, therefore, it emphasizes on assistance, compassion and charity. Even today, this is the philosophy of a number of disability organizations in India.

Instead of enacting necessary legislation and executing them in letter and spirit, disabled people are pitied and sympathized. In Indian context, religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Buddhism have more or less uniformly espoused

charitable and pitiable approaches towards persons with disabilities, projecting them as dependent creatures and extra burden on their families who need constant support system for their routine subsistence. Recently, honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi bestowed them with a label i.e. 'Divyang' instead of 'Viklang'. Such sympathy based approach erects attitudinal, physical and institutional barriers for them. They are viewed through the lens of prevailing system and are expected to modify themselves to adapt to it instead of making the system conducive for them. This attitude often creates alienation and inferiority complex among these people. The social model takes disability away from the individual alone and places the responsibility on society as a whole. It argues that disability is a result of social structures and not a defect in the body or brain. Tom Shakespeare says that 'social model' redefines disability and claims that 'disability' corresponds to gender whereas 'impairment' corresponds to sex. At its core, Disability Studies explores how societies draw distinctions between normal and abnormal bodies and minds; how these distinctions matter in the lives of the disabled and the non-disabled alike; and how people with disabilities like Stephen Hawkins, Helen Keller, Sudha Chandran, Javed Abidi, Ira Singhal, and Deepa Malik have transformed the world around them. In this regard, Human Rights model is quite new and productive which counts and rethinks disabled population as human beings and extends basic human rights to them. It insists that charity and sympathy are no longer workable. Rather, the disabled community requires accessibility to the human rights enjoyed by everyone. It is also discussed in a panel entitled, "Disability Rights as Human Rights" at Emory University where Salman Rushdie along with other distinguished professors discussed that people with certain kinds of disability have been considered not fully human and thus not covered by human

rights. Another panellist, Garland-Thomson expanded on the idea of dependency stating that all human beings are dependent and have the need for a supportive environment. She also contends that the only difference between people with disabilities and able-bodied people is that the able-bodied live in an environment that is built to support them only. Because of its political and theoretical foundations in the late 1960s and early 1970s Disability Studies has now emerged as an academic discipline in its own right. It has also become a core subject of study at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in various universities.

This chapter focuses on issues of ‘identity of disabled people’ and presents a striking analogy between disability trouble and Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* which seeks to rethink ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. Butler claims that biological sex is just as culturally constructed as social gender. Similarly, the chapter emphasizes on the most peripheral topic in disability studies i.e. sexuality. Habib, in *Gender and Disability*, discusses that women with disabilities face a double discrimination, both in terms of gender and disability. The most punishing for women with disability is the attitude of society towards them. This often causes their alienation and inferiority complex.

The primary work studied in this chapter is *One Little Finger* by Malini Chib. This autobiography is adapted in a movie also i.e. *Margarita, With a Straw* (2014). It talks about the concept of disability, particularly with the context of educational, sexual and physiological needs of a young girl student with cerebral palsy. In India, the sexuality concerns of people with disabilities are rarely acknowledged or have been unaddressed and, therefore, have not been considered an important area of study for



research. It also unravels the negative meanings attached to the identity of disabled people and questions the perpetuation of discriminatory practices in our so called constructed 'normal' society. It exhibits the unconventional, true and modern picture of a girl with cerebral palsy who has attributes to be a musician, composer and song writer and bisexual. She is never conscious of the deficits of her body and is always in search of opportunities to celebrate her prime age. But she finds infrastructural barriers which are the most repulsive barriers to persons with disabilities in accessing toilets, colleges, assembly or any other public places.

Based on the theory of postmodernism, disability has been projected as a human difference which needs to be celebrated. Movies like *Kabil* (2017), *Black* (2005), *Angel* (2011) and *Taare Zameen Par* (2007) also represent disability in positive light. The book *Post-humanism* edited by Promod K. Nayar provides a great critical insight to comprehend that disability is no longer an aberration as there is nothing normal in absolute sense because postmodernism denies the idea of absolutism. Everyone normal or abnormal has to rely on machines for perfection. Moreover, according to the given theory, man has emerged into a 'cyborg', making it very complicated to unravel the two different entities.

Unlike other identity categories such as gender, race and sexuality, disability is not yet recognized as a legitimate or relevant position from which to address such broad subjects as literature, philosophy and the arts. Even a well-known disability theorist, Michael Berube admits that although people have sympathy for wheelchair users, they are averse to provide them a truly democratic space. The recent announcement of the

Union minister of HRD that Disability will be included in school curriculum is a constructive step towards sensitizing the young minds about the issues of differently-abled population. This chapter explores the idea that disability is a culturally specific complex embodiment. It is not merely an embodiment which has only to do with body, or pain, or physicality, but even more as an ideology that guides human consciousness. These conventional mores ascribe certain prohibitions and permitted behaviours and expectations. Ultimately, the baseline of female humaneness is largely defined in terms of beauty, motherhood and sexuality. If they seem unable to maintain these standards, they are considered disabled, metaphorically. Ironically, even today, disabled women are deemed as deviant because of wrong actions performed in their past lives. The notion of disability is based on the illogical Hindu concept of 'karma' principle which states that one's destiny is shaped by his/her actions of past life. In this way, the research is an attempt to discuss their condition with a latent desire to affect the transformation in mindset. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2016 and 'accessible India campaign' are the major initiatives in this regard.

In this way, the present research is quite contemporary because it deals with the contemporary problematic issues of identity formation i.e. constructed identity and self-perceived identity. The study attempts to deliberate upon the nuances associated to the problematics of 'dalit', 'differently-abled' and transgender. The research establishes that 'disabled' are as normal as other human beings. This idea of 'differently-abled', temporarily-abled or 'abled' is discussed with reference to literary and cinematic representations. The same is the case of transgender group, there is also dichotomy of one's inner feelings and societal roles. In his book, *Literary Theory: A Very Short*

*Introduction*, Jonathan Culler rightly argues that literature has always been concerned with questions about identity. There are some narratives where identity is essentially determined by birth and in other narratives the protagonist constructs identity on the reversal of fortune or on the basis of personal qualities. In this way, literature gets value by providing vicarious experiences. It makes readers learn to empathize.

The biggest limitation of the research has been the vast unexplored domain of subalternity that is perpetually devoid of human rights in true sense of the word. At the moment when everyone is guided by the concept of dignified life, the focus of the present research lies on mini-narratives concerning select marginal groups while there are certain other groups which could not be studied due to paucity of time. Apart from it, social change which is the sole motive of this research is slow and involves the political, economic, social and cultural environment to change. It also requires the social-psychology of the masses to transform over time. India has seen many of its traditions wither away or face continued resistance from modernity and rationality. With regard to a modernist idea of human rights, Zhihe Wang, the Director of the Institute for Postmodern Development of China, in his article “Toward a Postmodern Notion of Human Rights” observes that there are three shortcomings of modernist idea of human rights- first, modernist human rights promote western centrism as they are western derived and can be said to be biased and serve only western interests; second, a modernist idea of human rights is rooted in individualism and dictates individual dignity; and thirdly, human rights that are modernist in nature are abstract and uni-dimensional and he presents two reasons for this statement. On the one hand he argues that too much attention is put on political rights and not enough on economic, social and cultural rights which makes human rights

‘impractical’. On the other hand, strong emphasis is given on rights without sufficient acknowledgement of duties which makes human rights abstract and contradictory to the idea of human rights itself.

The above discussion presented by Wang makes it problematic to envisage a modernist human rights approach to human rights education. Human rights education embedded in modernist ideas of human rights could devalue difference and diversity as well as promote the misuse of human rights when disregarding the importance of duties or responsibilities. So the research recommends or strives for the postmodernist idea of human rights as it is more suited for a democratic government. Other reasons for opting for a postmodernist idea of human rights include: acknowledgment of duties, unity between Western and Eastern values, and emphasis on the right to life and human rights as an absolute objective. A postmodernist idea of human rights posits a unity of individualism and collectivism as well.

This research certainly disseminates the knowledge of human rights and is sure to create empathy and awareness among its readers about various issues of human rights violation. The scope of research lies in the fact that the horizon of human rights is expanding day by day and, therefore, various issues under the ambit of human rights are yet to be explored. Apart from it, the research foregrounds the symbiosis of human rights and literature as a new field of study.

It is needless to say that in the present times, human rights have become tip of the tongue and out of various dimensions of human rights, only civil and political rights are generally focused upon but the changing scenario requires the prominence to be given to economic, social and cultural rights also. Human rights, in the broader sense, have paved

the way to new laws, charters and covenants but in this age of neoliberalism, there is a constant threat to human rights. Perhaps, this threat could be averted by bringing human rights education at all levels of education. Therefore, human beings have to make far more conscious efforts to alter the world reality, by considering the recent changes in the global scenario, including massive violation of human rights.

Despite some serious failures of implementation of human rights at international level, however, the overall trajectory and effect of human rights has been progressive to envision an ideal world that is practically unrealizable or last utopia since inception. Human rights inspire a never-ending global crusade to bring a phenomenal change in the direction of establishing truly democratic world. We have been moving steadily, if slowly, toward greater inclusiveness and greater effectiveness in realizing the promise of human rights for all human beings. Historically speaking, the human rights ethos also played an important role in bringing down the Berlin Wall, and in ending apartheid in South Africa. The establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Hague in 2003 is another remarkable achievement for the realization of human rights. Apart from it, the integration of human rights in peacekeeping has significantly enhanced United Nations Peace Missions to prevent and respond to human rights violations. Consequently, as of June 2013, there are 15 human rights components in UN peace missions. The recognition of the human rights of 'trans genders' and people with disabilities is a significant shift. In this way, the overall picture over the past sixty nine years is not really all that bleak and there are the reasons to assert that human rights paradigm is making progress.

The advocates of human rights are concerned with distributive justice, sustainable development and a variety of public and private sector policies designed to enhance

human security. The achievement of human rights is possible only by shrinking circles of exclusion, nationally and internationally and by enhancing ethical understanding of human rights issues across the borders. In the book *Human Rights and Narrated Lives – The Ethics of Recognitions* (2004), Schaffer and Smith explain that human rights have become an integral part of the moral vocabulary of governments and policies of democratic political structures. Giving cognizance to a postmodernist idea of human rights for human rights education could begin to (re)define human rights education in such a manner that it may establish itself as a field with its own voice. This postmodern vision of human rights is free from debates devoted to human nature and natural rights. It tries to be free from any kind of metaphysics and essentialism also. In this context, eminent human rights scholar, Upendra Baxi in his essay, “Two Notions of Human Rights ‘Modern’ and ‘Contemporary’” contrasts by defining that in the ‘modern’ paradigm of rights the logics of exclusion are prominent whereas in the ‘contemporary’ paradigm the logics of inclusion are paramount. Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore also puts the idea that the problem does not lie in eradicating or wipe out all differences but the problem is how to unite with all differences intact.

However the study, meeting with the hypothesis and objectives, does not put forward any claims with respect to exclusivity and leaves a considerable scope for further explorations towards mobilizing the people against injustice and indignities. The present research certainly paves the way for more and more studies on subaltern groups and their rights as represented through literature or cinema. It also depicts that human rights advances are presently occurring, and are therefore theoretically achievable in future.