Chapter VI

Conclusion

Criminals, inferior, incapable, subhuman, objects of curiosity are the prejudiced perceptions of people about disabled people. Most of the literary texts use to reiterate the same negative notions whenever they happen to have a representation of disability in them. This attitude is said to be more disabling than the actual disabling of one's own impairment. The study attempts to show how the stereotypical perception of people regarding disability further disable and discriminate them through the popular and usual representation of disability. The research is not only to identify the problems, but also to suggest certain remedies in this regard.

The study presents an overview of disability and its continuance through the ages till today. It also discusses the emergence of disability rights movements, disabled veterans' movements in the plight of disabled people. It is understood that the present disability awareness and consciousness are the results of the efforts of the disability activists and scholars especially activists and scholars from the developed counties like US and UK. The eminent theorist, Tom Shakespeare accepts neither the medical nor social model and rather prefers an approach which has the inclusion/interaction of both the medical and social model approaches for the benefit of disabled community. He calls such an approach as an interactional approach:

An interactional approach allows for the different levels of experience, ranging from the medical, through psychological, to the environmental, economic and political. Rather than dismissing individual interventions as reactionary and structural change as progressive, this approach allows each opinion to be discussed on its merits. An interactional approach would suggest there are many different
factors which could be addressed to improve quality life: coaching or therapy to improve self-esteem; medical intervention to restore functioning or reduce pain; aids and adaptation; barrier removal; anti-discrimination and attitudinal change; better benefits and services (62).

This study discusses the emergence of disability studies as a uniquely interdisciplinary field of inquiry operating in the humanities, social sciences, and legal studies as well as in public policy, education, health and medicine to challenge the stereotypical representation of disability which is believed to marginalize the disabled community. It also analyzes the different roles and rules set by the proponents of disability studies.

This study looks into the important tasks set by the renowned theorists. For example, Simi Linton’s “Disability Studies/Not Disability Studies” sketches clearly the job of the scholars who work in this field. Along with Linton, Lennard Davis also makes us understand the construction of ‘norm abnormal’ as a category by the bourgeois society. He says, ‘By using the disabled moment, I want to defamiliarize disability, denarrativize it, and in a sense debourgeoisify it.’ This study looks into the representation of disability in the select novels of Doris Lessing through the perspective of disability studies.

Viewed in this light, Chapter I, introduction discusses disability in detail, origin and development of different disability movements, various approaches, emergence of Disability studies as a new field of inquiry, and its goal and principle against the discrimination and marginalization of people with disability. This study gives an account about the literary representation of disability from the select novels of Doris Lessing. It also shows the negative perception of people which is expressed through the representation of disability. This study shows how the recurrent image in
the literary representation discriminates the disabled people. It also casts light on areas where activists and scholars have to bring the attitudinal changes for the creation of an equal and inclusive society for the people with disabilities. This chapter discusses the need to bring about a change in the literary representations, especially in novels pertaining to the negative portrayal of disability, social exclusion, and oppression.

The chapter titled, "Disability as Monstrosity": The Fifth Child and Ben in the World is a detailed analysis of different negative terms employed by the nondisabled people at different times to address the people with disability, especially, the word ‘monster’, its origin and meanings, and pictures how the word ‘monster’ came to denote a person with disability. It also accounts the particulars about the normative family and society’s transformation of Ben’s disabled body into a ‘monstrous’ body.

There are different scenes from the novels where the depiction of Ben, presented as a monster is based on the recurrent negative perception of representation of disability. As Barnes points out the various images of disabilities, the depiction of Ben in the novel is stereotypical in nature. We see Ben as pitiable and pathetic, a threat to his ‘normal’ family, an object of curiosity, victim of violence, sexually abnormal, super cripple, sinister and evil, and disabled person as a burden. This chapter makes clear the idea that the ‘monsters’ are not born, but created, created by the normative family and society.

The chapter titled, "Critiquing the Institution and Science in The Fifth Child and Ben in the World" discusses the exclusion of the people with disability, and the fear of science. This chapter critiques the nineteenth century notion of segregating the defective/disabled body into institution. This chapter gives a complete picture of the beginning of medical science and its power in
segregating and sterilizing the people with disabilities based on the eugenics theories in institutions. It also discusses the process of segregation and sterilization as being in close connection with the advent of industrialization. Also discussed is an account of different stages of the development of institutions and the harsh treatment of people with disabilities. The way in which the family sends Ben to institution and a clear picture of the institutional treatment of persons with severe disabilities is evidence to the normative attitude towards people with disabilities given in this chapter. Here again the negative portrayal of disability representation is noticeable with Ben in the institution. The negative perception and recurrent notion of disability— as a burden to family and society, disabled body as an object of medical treatment, abandoning the disabled children, and the segregation/sterilization of the defectives and the institution established in the remote areas, lack of visitors, the harsh treatment of the staff. The orphaned patients, the poor medical assistance are stereotypical in all the novels. Besides the institution, this chapter also deals with science for its fascination with extraordinary bodies. It critiques scientists’ choice of the disabled body as specimens of the laboratory where they dissect the disabled body out of curiosity which renders the scientists ‘inhuman.’

The chapter titled, “Post World War Stress and Trauma of Veteran with Disability in Alfred and Emily” is the study of the representation of a First World War disabled veteran, his family and children. It discusses the various establishments of veterans with disability movements, organizations, and services. The emergence of charity, philanthropy, and rehabilitations services were in full swing during this time. It also gives an account of how the government and other private organizations took care of the veterans with disabilities, and the different ways in which veterans with disability and civilian with disability were treated.
It is also a study of the impact of the First World War on disabled veteran. Along with the impairment, the stress and trauma of the trench warfare suffering of Alfred is discussed in this chapter. Usually the disabled veteran was either depicted as being vengeful towards the government and society or as a super-crip. Alfred as a disabled veteran is neither vengeful nor a super-crip rather shown in the daily ordinary life with its all its good and bad timings. Except the tone-‘war victimized my parents,’ and Alfred talking about the cruelty of trench warfare throughout his life, the representation of the disabled veteran in the novel is not subject to the stereotypical portrayal.

Kailes Says;

Public attitudes about disability are usually much more disabling than an actual disability. Attitudinal barriers are the most difficult barriers to break through. The challenge is to change the attitudes by using many channels: legislation, regulation, enforcement, integration, education, relationships, and LANGUAGE. (2)

According to Paul K. Longmore, the language is one of the barriers of people with disabilities. The chapter, “Language as a Disabling Tool: The Fifth Child, Ben in the World, The Cleft and Alfred and Emily” discusses how the use of language associated with disability disabled them, and how people’s use of such words as metaphors disables and discriminates them. This chapter also accounts for the power of language in general, the use of negative language associated with disability, negative language used as a metaphor, change and challenge through euphemistic terminology, and neologisms used in novels selected for study.

It also emphasizes the attitudinal change towards people with disabilities through the use of appropriate language by showing examples such as ‘person first’ language. This chapter lists out
the metaphors associated with disability and it shows how disabling is effected in the select novels, *The Fifth Child* and *Ben in the World*, *The Cleft* and *Alfred and Emily*.

Chapter VI, the conclusion is the summing up of my study.

Suggestions

As per the report of Disability studies activists and scholars, irrespective of age, gender, class, place, color, people get disabled at any time. According to Davis only 15% of people with disabilities are born with impairments. He says disabilities are acquired through different ways by living in this world, for example by working in the factories, by driving insufficiently safe cars, by living in the toxic environments or high-crime areas. That is the reason activists prefer Temporarily Able Bodied (TAB) instead of nondisabled people without disabilities. There is no assurance to live without disability. Wilson & Wilson says, 'all people who live long enough are likely at one time or another to experience disability themselves or be closely related to someone who is disabled.'

Anyone can become disabled at any point of time. Disability community is the second majority of the world. They claim themselves as minority, no longer marginal. As how people with hearing impaired came to be called as Deaf, a minority community with their sign language it is society which constructs the disability. It segregates people with disabilities with certain labels for its own benefits, and to be out of fear or out of fear. It is clearly stated that disability is a socio-political, economic and cultural construction.

Thus this study is an attempt to deconstruct the stereotypical image of disability. The purpose and aim of this study is to deconstruct the constructed images of disability which remain as the barriers in the society. All the stereotypical images should be removed for the active
participation of persons with disabilities in social life, and people should change their attitude of
treating them as inferior, incapable, dependent, and subhuman. Disability studies scholars should
engage in challenging/questioning the constructed images of disability through the literary
representations from disability studies perspective, and must try to work for the removal of
environmental, altitudinal, and architectural barriers. People without disabilities should stop
looking at disability with a negative perception. They should realize that the negative notion is
just a socio-political construction by the ‘normal’ people.

Activists and scholars should bring awareness about disability among both persons with/without
disabilities in urban and rural areas. When the society is disabled friendly and accessible to
persons with disability there will not be any disability at all unless otherwise the impairment
causes it. As per Shakespeare’s argument, an approach should be impartial for the researchers
and scholars to focus on every component to enhance the quality of the life of disabled
community.

Most of the developed countries are successful in making an accessible environment for the
people with disabilities. When we see the improved life of the people with disabilities in the
urban areas, we realize it is not the same in rural areas. This situation should change in future
with a similar accessible and friendly environment to promote the life of people with disabilities
as one among us and no more ‘not one of us.’ Constant research in the field has the highest
possibilities to improve the standard of living of the people with disabilities. Scholars should
engage in research wherever there is demand.

Kenneth Lindblom & Patricia A. Dunn says, ‘we must move from acknowledgement of social
construction to action that informs meaningful, public reconstruction of what counts as ‘normal’.
They also suggest the responsibilities of a scholar in order make a significant impact in this regard and demonstrate a rhetorical analysis of the ways in which ordinary language and assumption adversely inform public documents, laws, organizational rules, cultural values, and so forth in a manner that perpetuates problematic constructions of disability and also suggests suggest better that is, less disabling terms and constructions for those documents.

In representation the depiction of persons with disabilities should be in such a way as to improve their life standard instead of demeaning it. As Barnes suggests there should be a team everywhere to train the media people to be aware of representing disability in books, films, television, and press. Disability access to enhance the life of persons with disabilities could be the theme of literary texts. Besides, all these current involvement and research by the activists and scholars show the development of field of study with a promise to enhance the life of the people with disabilities.

- Society’s misconceptions about the disabled people are constantly reinforced by disabling terms. Activists and scholars should work together to eliminate such terms.
- Disabled people should be recruited in all fields, and necessary education and training must be given to them.
- One should stop presenting the individuals as receivers of charity. Avoid showing disabled people as dependent.
- One should stop depicting a connection between impairment and evil.
- Presenting disabled people as objects of curiosity should be removed.
- Ridiculing a disabled individual or making jokes of their life ought to be seriously condemned.
- Disabled individual as victim or object of violence not be presented.
• Presenting disabled characters with extra-ordinary abilities or attributes, as 'super-crip,' should be refrained from.

• Disabled people should not be depicted as sexually abnormal
Works Cited


