ABSTRACT

Disabled people are marginalized in every society. This happened because of the lack of voice and agency from the disabled community. Since late twenties a new awareness about the rights and spaces for disabled people emerged through the disability rights movements. Activists and scholars demanded accessibility and safety in transportation, architecture and environment, equal opportunities in education, employment, and independent living. Gradually disabled people are coming forward to speak for themselves out of personal experience, and voicing against all social discrimination. Disabled activists and scholars noticed the same discrimination in the academic arena through the representation of disability by the ‘normal’ people. Therefore, Disability studies as an exclusive field challenges the stereotypical representation of disabled people. Disability studies as a uniquely interdisciplinary field of inquiry operates in the humanities, social sciences, and legal studies as well as in public policy, education, health and medicine to challenge the represented prejudiced notions of disability which results in the marginalization of the disabled community.

This study is an attempt to deconstruct the constructed biased image of disability in select novels of Doris Lessing. Chapter 1 of this thesis presents the aim and scope of the study. It also introduces the difference between ‘impairment’ and “disability.” This gives a brief sketch about disability movements, disability activism, approaches and theory. It also talks about the emergence of the academic discipline called, Disability studies, its goals and principles and its present engagement. Chapter 2, “Disability as Monstrosity”: The Fifth Child and Ben in the World” discusses the implication of the depiction of disability as
monstrosity in *The Fifth Child* and *Ben in the World*. This chapter discusses how different names were assigned to disabled people at different times categorized disabled people as 'monsters,' also deals with its origin and meaning, and the employment of the term, ‘monster’ that refers to disabled person. It studies the representations which make the disabled body of Ben a ‘monster,’ and also presents how the family and the society label monstrosity with the disability and fail to make the distinction between two different categories, disability and monstrosity. This chapter states that the stereotypical portrayal of disabled body constructs disability as monstrosity.’

Chapter 3 entitled, “Critiquing the Institution and Science in *The Fifth Child* and *Ben in the World*” is a study of how Institution and Science exclude the disabled people. The industrialization transformed and built institutions which resulted into the segregation of the disabled people. Medical institutions treated disabled people as an object of medical subject; this notion will be questioned in this chapter.

Chapter 4, “Post World War Stress and Trauma of Veteran with Disability in *Alfred and Emily*,” is a study of the representation of veterans with disabilities. It gives an overall view of the emergence of disability organization and services, and disability rights movements in special reference with disabled veterans. This chapter sketches out how the veterans with disabilities and civilians with disabilities were treated differently.

Chapter 5, “Language as a Disabling Tool: *The Fifth Child, Ben in the World, The Cleft* and *Alfred and Emily*” is a study of how language acts as a barrier for disabled people. This chapter provides a clear picture of the negative terminologies associated with disability and their use in the literary texts. It also analyzes the metaphorical use of such words from the
above mentioned novels. This chapter insists on and suggests a proper use of language with people with disabilities to avoid the stigmatization.

Chapter 6, provides a sum up of my study.