

Chapter I

Introduction

“Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society”.

(Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation. Fundamental Principles of Disability. UPIAS, 1976)

I.1 History of People with Disabilities

According to the definition provided by the *Marriam Webster Dictionary of English* (1974) the term “History” means “a chronological record of significant events (such as those affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). In comparison to the other historical records, very little has been written on the history of the people with disabilities. The lack of available data documenting various facets of disability could possibly be the consequence of either keeping track of the various concepts of disability or plain lack of interest in this field of study. Being the oppressed and marginalised section of the society, the historical narratives of people with disabilities have been neglected and overlooked over the years. This attitude was continued towards the people with disabilities until the Enlightenment philosophy came into its existence.

In second century, AD, a Greek physician named Soranos in the answer to the question ‘How to recognise a child that is worth raising?’ mentioned that a child:

should be perfect in all its parts, limbs, and senses, and have no obstructed passages, including the ears, nose, throat, urethra, and anus. Its natural movements should be neither slow nor feeble; its limbs should bend and stretch; its size and shape should be appropriate; and it should respond to natural stimuli.

(Gynaecology, 2.6.5)

Oscar Wilde in his work *The Critic as Artist* (1981) rightly pointed out, “whatever, in fact is modern in our life we owe to the Greeks” (Wilde 45). The societal norms have been somewhere deeply influenced by Greek religion, mythology, and myths. In the state of Sparta, Ancient Greece, many cases of discarding the babies with disabilities can be found. It has also been observed that in ancient Greece, people with impairments were not allowed to participate into the religious rituals (Garland). Only male individuals with perfect body used to participate into gymnasiums and Olympic Games (Rose). Plutarch a Greek philosopher in his work on Lycurgus shared these details of Spartans thoughts. The Greek gods and goddesses were represented as idealised version of human body. However, in Greek mythology, Hephaestes son of Hera and Zeus was physically impaired. Due to which he was strictly prohibited to enter heaven (Morford et al.). Later Goddess of Love Aphrodite felt pity on him and got married to him. Unfortunately, she left him to marry an abled-bodied man. Again, if we talk about the famous Greek tragedy of Oedipus Rex, the term “Oedipus” is translated as “swollen foot”, Oedipus had killed his father and married to his mother, after realising the truth he blinded himself as an act of self-punishment (Fischer 182). It can be said that there was a strong connection between disability, social exclusion, inefficiency, rejection, sins and punishments. Popular myths from ancient Greece such as myths of Tiresias (visually impaired), Hephaestus (clubfoot), and Larunda (mute) show that disability is a punishment (Mitchell and Snyder). In Greek society the idea of physical as well as mental fitness were very much important. There was very little space for the people with physical and intellectual impairments. In Greek civilisation, the idea of perfect body expanded around 700-675 BC (Garland). The Greek ideas influenced the Hebraic culture of the ancient time where impairments have been considered as the result of some kind of offense. Biblical text is full of with notes that described disability as the

result of misdeed. The Old Testament suggests that if human beings are found to be engaged in sinful activities, then God will punish them by making them visually impaired (*Deuteronomy*, 27:27, Holy Bible). In some Biblical texts, the condition of being visually impaired has been compared with the condition of being fool as metaphor. The New Testament follows these ideologies too (Stiker 85). Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle around 350 BC mentioned, “those born deaf become senseless and incapable of reason” (*Metaphysics* 980a), Socrates also believed that people with disabilities are incapable of thinking in a right direction, again Plato in his book *Republic* (375 BC) talked about the process of eugenics.

Hindu mythology often associates disability with the notion of karma, whereby physical limitations are seen as consequences of misdeeds from previous lives. In the *Mahabharata*, King Dhritarashtra is born blind, a condition ascribed to the karmic repercussions of his previous actions. His blindness is often metaphorically associated with his moral and political inadequacies as a leader (Ghai). In the *Ramayana*, Manthara, a hunchbacked servant, is depicted as devious and malevolent, playing a direct role in Rama’s exile. Her physical deformity is metaphorically associated with immorality (Mehrotra). Ancient legal documents such as the *Manusmriti* expressly advocate for exclusionary policies. *Manusmriti* 9.21 argues that those with physical differences should be excluded from inheritance and participation in certain ceremonies, thereby integrating and fusing discrimination against people with disabilities (Saraswati). The Indian philosophical tradition, especially in its spiritual readings, contextualises disability within a paradigm of detachment and renunciation. In certain schools of thought, the physical body is seen as an illusion (*maya*) or a temporary vessel, and bodily impairments are considered irrelevant in the pursuit of liberation (*moksha*). However, this idealist detachment can render real-world issues of

accessibility and dignity invisible. Although many traditions, such as Buddhism, advocate for sensitivity towards suffering, they often depict disability as a pain to be overcome, rather than as a state to be understood in its own terms (Sharma). The widespread belief in karmic causation may foster a societal atmosphere where those with disabilities are either pitied or held accountable instead of being empowered. As Anita Ghai notes, “The emphasis on past-life misdeeds naturalizes disability as a justified fate rather than a socio-political issue” (Ghai 57).

In Rome, children with disabilities were drowned in Tiber (Stiker). Lucius Annaeus Seneca philosopher from ancient Rome in his work *De Ira (On Anger)* (41 AD), Book 1, Section 15 mentioned, “We destroy monstrous births; we also drown children who at birth are weakly and abnormal.” In the fifth century AD after the decline of Rome, Western Europe was disturbed by turbulence, disharmony and violence. At that time of social and political turbulence, the condition of the people with disabilities was terrible. At the last half of the sixth century AD, St. Augustine who brought Christianity to Britain, declared that disabilities were a punishment given by God “for the fall of Adam and other sins” (Ryan and Thomas 87). Around 1300s when Renaissance was started, the Greek and Roman ideologies regarding perfect body, was still visible in the different art forms of European countries. Irina Metzler’s work *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking about Physical Impairment in the High Middle Ages* (2006) showed how in Europe, people with disabilities were thought to be the living example of Satan’s presence in this world (Metzler). Heinrich Kramer in *Malleus Maleficarum* or *Hammer of the Witches* (1486) declared that impaired children were the output of the mother’s attachment with black magic and witchcraft. He mentioned, “Witches can cause sterility; they can cause miscarriage; they can render children deformed. All these are effects of their compact with the Devil” (Part II, Qn 1). Children

with impairments were not only portrayed as objects of pity or marginalisation; they were also depicted as demonic emblems or cursed entities. This literary text established an anti-medical, anti-rational environment that disregarded or rejected natural causes of impairment. Further, it developed a superstitious, punishing, prejudiced mindset that criminalised disability, which engendered fear, distrust, and conflict within society. In early seventeenth century, people with mental illness were being tortured badly instead of being treated with proper medications. In later half of seventeenth century because of Plague, many people became ill, impaired and their condition was pathetic.

After French Revolution (1788-1790), the eighteenth century witnessed a major shift in the exploration of agriculture, and land, the emergence of industrialisation. Additionally, it also rushed the emergence of the Enlightenment philosophy (c. 1680s–1790s) and Liberal Utilitarianism (c. 1780s–1880s). Throughout Europe, the Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and François Voltaire developed an outline of enlightened ideas including criticism of established destructive religious and mythical notions. Their intention was to develop a society where individual human beings will be treated equally irrespective any differences. In nineteenth century, there was a thought that people with mental illnesses or intellectual disabilities are threat to the society because they need lifelong care from institutions or hospitals. Therefore, offering the medical facilities to the people with disabilities would be difficult for society (Trent). Sometimes people with mental illness were proposed to be killed through practicing euthanasia (Lifton). Between 1939-1945, when Hitler was the Chancellor of Germany, the Nazi Government implemented Sterilization Law under which around 275,000 people with disabilities were killed (Friedlander). The US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had polio in 1921, due to which he lost his ability to walk anymore. He also refused to be visible with his

wheelchair in public because people would not accept their President as a person with disability (Gallagher). In USA different states like San Francisco, New Chicago, Denver had implemented ugly laws according to which people with disabilities were not allowed to come on road and talk publicly, otherwise they had to pay the penalty for violating the laws (Schweik).

In disability studies, Lennard Davis highlights a concept asserting that prior to the Enlightenment, Western culture was influenced by a misguided notion of the qualities that constitute an ideal human being. The American philosopher Eva Feder Kittay's understanding on the condition of people with disabilities as mentioned in her work *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency* (1999), says that these people are not the victim of any tragedy and there is nothing to feel negative about it. Alternatively, it is an incarnation of human heterogeneity that may or may not have tragic elements. The ultimate truth is that we the human beings all depend on each other for different reasons. Moreover, the realisation of the same is very much important because as soon as we will realise that we all need other people, only then we will be able to avoid the previous discourses regarding disability as tragic or of caring for someone with a disability as a burden. Finally, if we tend to settle for the concept that we all are interdependent at the different stages of our life, disability and impairments become a scope for human heterogeneity overtime and space rather than a tragedy, deficit, or abnormality. The idea of interdependence supports to re-convey the negative ideas with a positive understanding and alternative theoretical articulation. This alternative understanding can lead us to accept diseases and disabilities in human beings and of the vulnerabilities in our own bodies. It can be said that the terms like "disabled", "abnormal", "handicapped", "cripple" both inside and the outside of disabled community invite negative interpretations along with it. By labelling these negative

tags, society exercises its power over the people with disabilities. As an alternative option, the term “differently abled” or “people with disability” or “individuals with disability” has been suggested after Disability Rights Movement, around the 1990s because these alternative terms generate positive interpretations and avoid discrimination. The society can do nothing about the deformity in body but can change the negative and narrow perspectives on the same and transform the mindset of people by creating disabled friendly space and environment and by accepting people with disability as a varied form of human beings.

1.2 Disability Rights Movement

The Disability Rights Movement as a socio- political movement intends to forfend indifferent rights, opportunities, and access to all kind of resources for people with disabilities. It emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, largely in response to the civil rights and women’s rights movements and has since grown into a powerful force for change. During the First World War and Second World War, many soldiers as well as common people were injured and became physically impaired, these people demanded to release fund and asked for rehab process. However, instead of offering proper rehabilitation, people with disabilities were being institutionalised and excluded from society. Disability activists started to question the process of exclusion around 1970s through Disability Rights Movement. Disability Rights Movement has distinctively significance in world history. It can be stated that including children and adults with disabilities, the community of people with disabilities is one of the largest minority groups in world. Though our so-called normative society considers people with disabilities as the odd ones however, these people with disabilities possess same dreams, desires, wishes, talents, intellects like other people around them. It is apparent from the historical events that the United States saw significant transformations in the

20th century. During that period, different types of movements took place in US history, like Civil Rights Movement, Students Movement, Anti-Vietnam War Movement, Feminist Movement, African Americans Rights Movement, Gay Rights Movement, and Environmental Movement. Among them Disability Rights Movement was noteworthy.

At its core, the Disability Rights Movement seeks to challenge the social and physical barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. This includes advocating for accessibility in public spaces, transportation, education, and employment, as well as fighting against discrimination and concept of ableism. One of the major achievements of the Disability Rights Movement is the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life, including employment, transportation, and public accommodations. Other important victories include increased access to education and assistive technology, as well as the establishment of disability studies as an academic discipline. The Disability Rights Movement continues to fight for greater inclusion and acceptance, as well as for the recognition of disability as a natural and valuable aspect of human diversity. Through advocacy, education, and community building, disability activists and allies are working to create a more just and equitable society for all.

1.3 Activists of Disability Rights Movement and Their Inputs

Disability Rights Movements, which took place all over the world around late twentieth century; Edward Verne Roberts, Justin Whitlock Dart Jr, Frederick A. Fay, Judith Ellen Heumann “Judy”, Lex Frieden were the few activists from America who were leaders of the Disability Rights Movement. First, Disability Rights Movement was introduced

by Tom Harkin, David Dunrenberger, and Ted Kennedy in 1989. After the long struggles of these activists and lengthy legislation procedures, President George Bush signed the act on 26th July 1990. After passing the world's first inclusive civil rights law for the people with disabilities, they started to gain the equal rights as citizens by overcoming the social stigmas, culturally rooted negative ideologies and traditional way of approaching disability.

Edward Verne Roberts: Edward Verne Roberts was infected by poliovirus at the age of fourteen. He was unable to walk and used to spend most of the time in a breathing machine “iron lung”. He was paralysed from neck down. He learnt to use wheelchair and to breathe through a portable respiratory system. He criticises the fact that people with disabilities did not have the access to education. He was the first student with severe disability who joined University of California, Berkeley in 1963. After completing graduation, in 1974 he joined the Center for Independent Living as executive director. According to him, people with disabilities may need the support of some technologies and after which they can do anything. People can be limited by their body and never by their mind. After completing masters, he and his followers created one group called “Rolling Quads”. The group was designed to make the university campus more accessible for the students with disabilities who desired to earn degrees, have jobs and equal participation in society. In 1975, Robert was given the charge of the California Department of Rehabilitation by Governor Jerry Brown. He was told that he could never get married and be a father. However, he got married and had a son too. He became the President of World Institute on Disability in 1983. All he wanted was a barrier free environment around us for example, architects or structure of buildings, transportation, talking computer, chirping streetlights and other various assistive technologies which can be helpful to the people with disabilities. According to him,

assistive technology could only bring changes in the attitudes of people. He was one of the important figures of the Disability Rights Movement which later resulted in the legislation achievement with Americans with Disability Act (1990). He was the living proof or role model for the people with severe type disabilities.

Roland Johnson: Roland Johnson had intellectual disability from young age, and he was sent to the rehabilitation centre called Pennhurst in Pennsylvania. At this place, many people with disabilities were kept lock away from their families. They were not only treated as animals and criminals, but the authorities were also abusing them. Roland lived there for long thirteen years and when he came out from the rehab center, he started to fight for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities. His motif was to shut down these institutions like Pennhurst. Roland was the ideal figure, who proved that even people with intellectual disabilities could be intelligent, tough and smart who can take their own decision in life.

Justin Whitlock Dart Jr: American activist Justin Whitlock Dart Jr. has been recognised as the Father of Americans with Disability Act (1990), for his enormous contribution towards the people with disabilities. Like Roberts, Justin at very young age got affected by Polio, therefore was a wheelchair user. After achieving his graduation and master's degree, he thought to work for the people with disabilities. During his visit to a rehab centre in Vietnam in 1966, he saw the pathetic condition of children affected by Polio. From there only he and his wife started their advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. He worked for the Texas Governor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities. In 1981, he became the Vice-Chairman of National Council of Disability. He was also declared the head of Rehabilitation Services Administration in 1986. In 1988, Justin Whitlock Dart Jr. joined the Congressional Task Force as co-chair to work for the Americans with disabilities, which was the one-

step of passing Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. He was present with the president of America at the day of signing the act. He received Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998 for his selfless advocacy for his “politics of inclusion” of people with disabilities into mainstream society.

Frederick A. Fay: Frederick Allan Fay at very young age came across an accident in 1961, which caused injury in spinal cord and made him a wheelchair user. He took admission in University of Illinois where students with wheelchairs were allowed, and he completed his Doctorate degree in 1973. He was leader of a group called United Spinal Association which beliefs in the ideologies of Independent Living Movement. He wanted to create a disabled friendly atmosphere by making all the public places accessible to people with disabilities, which lead towards the implementation of the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968. He advocated for the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 503 & 504). He was suffering from syringomyelia, due to this illness; he started to work from home while lying in motorised bed, through a computerised machine hanging from the ceiling. He took the help of technologies in best possible way for reading, writing, speaking, listening and even to control the doors, windows, lights, fans and other electric materials. He was one of the activists who played major role in passing Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which ensures barrier free environment for the people with disabilities in society.

Judith Ellen Heumann “Judy”: Judith Ellen Heumann “Judy” from New York is known as the “Mother of the Disability Rights Movement” who fought throughout her life for the rights of the people with disabilities. Like Edward Verne Roberts, she also suffered from Polio in 1949, at the age of two, and started to use motorised wheelchair at very young age. She was not allowed to be into the school at first. Her body was confined into a wheelchair, but her mind was not, as she said, “It is not a tragedy to me

that I'm living in a wheelchair." Further she mentioned, "Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things we need to lead our lives — job opportunities or barrier-free buildings" (Heumann). However, with the moral support from her parents, she completed her graduation from Long Island University and master's from University of California. Judy was associated with the Independent Living Movement in Berkeley, U. S. With other activists like Ed Roberts and Joan Leon, she founded World Institute on Disability in 1983. Her advocacy for the rights of people the people with disabilities brought her to the post of Assistant Secretary of Special Education department and Rehabilitative Services under the Ministry of Education from 1993-2001. She also worked with the World Bank as an advisor for the development of people with disabilities from 2002-2017. She had been recognised as the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the U.S. State Department during Obama's governance from 2010-2017. In 2017, she was offered by the Mayor Mr. Fenty to work with the Department of Disability Services in Washington D.C. However, her role as an activist regarding the implementation of Rehabilitation Act, of 1973, Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities is above of all the work she has done later being in the position of power.

Lex Frieden: Lex Frieden "a chief architect of the Americans with Disabilities Act" had an injury in spinal cord, due to which he became paralysed. However, it could not stop him to live his life to the fullest. Lex Frieden completed his graduation from University of Tulsa and master's from University of Houston. He also has a doctorate degree in Law from the National University of Ireland. Mr. Frieden worked as the chairperson of the National Council on Disability and the American Association of

People with Disabilities. Beside this, he was the president of Rehabilitation International. He has been honoured as one of the initiators of the Independent Living Movement, which was started around 1970s. He has worked for different organisations such as US Department of Education, NIDRR, NCD, and Congressional Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of Americans with Disabilities, etc. He has played a crucial role in planning as well as moulding the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. He is working as professor and he has involved himself into the research regarding rehabilitation, and impression of ADA act of 1990 on the society, which changes people's attitude towards disability.

I.4 Disability Study as an Interdisciplinary Field of Research

The Society for Disability Studies, the oldest academic organisation explicitly traces its beginning to 1982. However, before that time there were individual research in small numbers that supported to form the foundations of this radically distinctive approach to the study of both the concepts and the experiences of disability. One of the key figures in the development of literary disability studies is Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, who coined the term “narrative prosthesis” to describe the way that disability is often used in literature as a metaphor or plot device rather than as a fully realised character or aspect of identity (Garland-Thomson). Other influential scholars in the field include Lennard J. Davis, Tobin Siebers, and Michael Bérubé. At present, literary disability studies continues to grow and evolve, with scholars exploring topics such as the intersection of disability, gender, and race, the role of disability in science fiction, and the representation of veterans with disabilities in literature. By examining disability in literature, this field offers insights into the ways that disability is constructed and understood in society, and how literature both reflects and shapes cultural attitudes toward disability. Disability study as an emerging field of inquiry has been drawn by

disability not merely as a medical category or concept but as a socio-cultural, political and economic category. Disability study has influenced entire aspects of humanities being closely related to the cultural and social affairs of the academic studies. Disability study has established itself as the part of marginal discourse in humanities, social sciences and has undergone various kinds of research with serious focus on people with disabilities and their space in society. Literary study of disability has contemporary significance as it helps people with physical or mental disabilities, to come into the mainstream society and to fight for their equal rights with their self-will. Theory of disability explains how disability study came out as an interdisciplinary field in humanities and social sciences. Disability theory encourages a change in the social attitude towards the people with disabilities. The reason of using this theory in any kind of literary works whether fiction, non-fiction, play, is to find the theme of disability in it, and then analyse them in its social, political and cultural context.

There are many theoretical models of defining disability such as traditional model, medial model, charity model, social model, rights model, cultural model, radical model, identity model, political model, economical model, gap model, minority model, limits model and so on. Among all these models, social model has been accepted by the scholars because it rejects the binary between “normal” and “abnormal”; it does not consider disability as a problem with the body rather it considers disability as a concept developed by the society to exclude the people with disabilities from limelight. Dwight Christopher Gabbardin in his article “Disability Studies and the British Long Eighteenth Century” (2011) comments, “Disability study is a uniquely interdisciplinary field operating in humanities, social sciences, and legal studies as well as in public policy, education, health, and medicine” (Gabbardin 80). Karen Hirsch also comments in his work “Culture and Disability: The Role of Oral History” (1995), that disability

study is a developing interdisciplinary field (Hirsch). This field of studies was brought into the academia at the beginning of Disability Rights Movement around 1970s to resist the traditional understanding or ideologies of disability and it became prominent around 1990s. Simi Linton in *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (1998) mentioned that in academics disability studies was the “base for examination of construction and function of disability” (Linton 133). Tobin Siebers in the book, *Disability Theory* (2008), mentioned:

Disability studies do not deacease or disables, hoping to cure or avoid them; it studies the social meanings, symbols, and stigma attached to disability identity and asks how they relate to enforced systems of exclusion and oppression, attacking the widespread belief that having an able body and mind determines whether one is quality human being. (p. 3-4).

At the beginning, disability studies had limited area of its own but with the progress of time, now it has become interdisciplinary in its nature and approach therefore has featured variously in literature, film studies, political sciences and other sciences of human concerns. As an interdisciplinary field of research, disability study includes the corpus from humanities, social sciences, legal studies, education, health and medicine in it and attempts to subvert or to reconstruct the traditional and orthodox notions on prevailing notion of disability. Simi Linton has expressed in her work “Disability Studies/ Not Disability Studies” (1998), clearly unfolded the role of disability studies as a field of research, as she noted down:

Disability studies should focus on the social, political and cultural context in which these ‘individual’ responses occur. This shift affords a more comprehensive view of society and human experience, and the attribution of

significance to human variation. This type of analysis challenges the biological as well as the individual/psychological explanation of human experience, achievement and behavior (p. 233).

Scholars in the field of literary disability studies try to apply a range of strategies to study the unique experiences of people with disabilities in literature. This involves paying attention to every detail in the text, such as language, imagery, and characterisation, to understand how the author is portraying disability. Scholars in this field sometimes adopt an intersectional approach, by merging it with other forms of social inequality, such as race, gender, and class where they take into account the ways in which disability intersects with other aspects of identity to create unique experiences. Some scholars use disability justice approach, which emphasises the need for systemic change to address the social and political barriers that individuals with disabilities face. Some scholars try to focus on disability studies in educational system by examining how literature is being used to teach about disability and promoting disability awareness in educational settings. Some scholars also work on autobiographies dealing with disability, which involves examining the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities as they are represented in literature. This approach often emphasises the importance of centring the voices of individuals with disabilities in scholarship about disability. Inclusively, in literary disability study, scholars try to examine the established nature of concepts like normal/abnormal, capable/incapable, perfection/imperfection, standard/unusual, common/uncommon, merit/demerit, ordinary/special excreta and attempt to deconstruct them where they try to shift the way of representing disability and people with disabilities from individualistic level to the community level that appreciates variety of human beings. As a result, this new discipline emerges to challenge the traditional way of representing

disability primarily based on orthodox notion, perpetuating stereotypical ideologies on disability.

I.5 Representation of Disability in Literature

The representation of disability in literature has evolved over time, from being portrayed as a source of tragedy or pity to a more nuanced understanding of disability as a diverse and complex identity. This thesis examines literary works featuring individuals with disabilities who strongly confront and oppose the barriers placed upon them. The protagonists, despite confronting complex situations unique to their individual disabilities, are influenced by progressive principles rooted in the Enlightenment philosophy, for instances the movement of disability rights, the notion of independent living, and the overall demand for social reformation. Motivated by these ideals, the characters discussed overcome the barriers and stigma with their personal dignity and autonomy while striving for betterment of their communities. Their endeavours go on to influence political activism, legislative changes, and technological aids in transforming deeply established views of disability as only worthy of pity, thereby, creating opportunities for recognition, autonomy, and inclusion within the larger societal context through their voices and advocacy while altering the understanding of disability from disabled to differently abled.

There are some common representations of disability in literature like: historically, characters with disabilities were often portrayed as tragic figures, whose disability or deformity was represented as a punishment or a burden. These characters were often used to elicit sympathy from the readers or audiences. For example, in *Oedipus Rex* (429 BC), Sophocles depicted the character of Oedipus as possessing inherent moral shortcomings. Oedipus rendered himself blind, driven by profound guilt after killing and marrying his mother. William Shakespeare depicted disability

in *Richard III* (1597), Caliban in *The Tempest* (1623), and *King Lear* (1608) as a form of punishment, representing a fate which is more than death itself. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1623), the character Caliban served as the representation of various forms of difference. The depiction of a deficiency in moral principles or malevolence was clearly present in *Richard III* (1597). In contrast to the tragic characters with disabilities, the inspiring characters with disabilities are often portrayed as heroic figures who overcome their disabilities to achieve greater things in life. This portrayal can be empowering, but it can also be limiting, and it reinforces stereotypes. In fantasy narratives such as *The Secret Garden* (1911) by F.H. Burnett, characters like Colin frequently experience a remarkable transformation, culminating in their miraculous recovery by the conclusion. Such narratives often prefer the notion of magical cures for disabilities over the acceptance of such conditions as inherent aspects of human diversity. Writers who incorporate characters with disabilities into their narratives often do not position them as the central figures. Rather, these figures are frequently portrayed as either antagonists or supporting characters who accentuate the admirable traits of the non-disabled protagonists, exemplified by Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) and Tiny Tim in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843). In *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) of Victor Hugo, the character called Quasimodo with his deafness has been compared with the able-bodied character Esmeralda. In John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937), the character of Lennie Small with intellectual disability had been compared with the intelligent character, George. In some cases, characters with disabilities are used as metaphors or symbolic representations of broader social issues or themes, such as the struggle for civil rights or the fragility of the human condition. Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), which was composed when he was blind, employed this blind condition as a metaphor for

demonstrating the concepts of religious understanding and justice from God. In the poem “Samson Agonistes” (1671), Samson experienced blindness as a form of punishment, yet he ultimately found renewed power and a sense of motive by way of profound spiritual contemplation. In Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), the Creature, formed by Victor, is regarded as abnormal owing to his horrific look and bodily formations. He embodied the profound themes of social exclusion, loneliness, and implications of reckless researchers’ desire to succeed. In Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* (1843), the character called Tiny Tim, with his disability, reflected the essence of being innocent, faith, and the profound impact of understanding and kindness. Quasimodo, the bellringer with physical disability in Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831), represents both the harsh treatment of people who are different by society and the misinterpreted beauty of the human spirit. *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe*, published in 1861, is a work by George Eliot. The central character, Silas Marner, had disability as a result of cataleptic fits, which served to isolate himself from his surrounding society. His condition represented the delicate balance and enduring strength inherent in the human being. More recently, disability has been increasingly represented in literature as a part of diversity, rather than as tragic or heroic exceptions. Characters with disabilities have been portrayed as complex individuals with a range of experiences and identities, rather than being defined solely by their disabilities. This is the positive as well as alternative way of representation by providing space for people with disabilities, which can directly influence an individual’s sense of self. The representation of disability in literature has become more nuanced and diverse field, exploring a wide range of themes and issues related to it.

1.6 Introduction to the Selected Primary Texts for Analysis

The aim of this research work is to analyse literary texts through alternative conceptual frameworks on disability which can yield new insights. Thus, it becomes essential to investigate how the ways in which representation of disability in literature has evolved over time, mirroring the shifts in societal, political and individual attitudes and understanding. Such a study not only deepens our understanding of the lived experiences of people with disabilities but also fosters empathy rather than mere sympathy, promoting a more inclusive and humanised perspective. To represent such understanding of disability twelve following English novels, have been put here in chronological order according to the year of publication from 1993 to 2019. *My Name is Brain Brian* (1993), *Accidents of Nature* (2006), *Window Boy* (2008), *Out of My Mind* (2010), *Emily Included* (2011), *The Running Dream* (2011), *She Is Not Invisible* (2013), *Laughing at My Nightmare* (2014), *Carry the Ocean* (2015), *This Kid Can Fly: It's about Ability (Not Disability)* (2016), *Shelter the Sea* (2017), *Born Just Right* (2019). These novels depict characters with several types of disabilities such as visual impairment, dyslexia, hand and leg impairment, autism, depression, anxiety, cerebral palsy and so on. The summary of the novels as follows:

My Name is Brain Brian

My Name is Brain Brian (1993) is a novel written by American author Jeanne Betancourt who herself is dyslexic. In the novel, she expresses her own experience through the protagonist of the novel Brian, who studies in sixth grade and is suffering from dyslexia. Jeanne has tried to question the pachydermatous attitude of the society where people make fun of the people with dyslexia and treat them as stupid. Brian's unsympathetic dyslexic father never accepted the fact that Brian has some learning differences rather he thinks that Brian does not work hard to be successful. Brian always tries to hide his problems from his rebellious friends so that everyone can accept him.

However, he experiences discrimination at school due to his learning differences. Fortunately, one teacher comes into Brian's life as blessing, who detects after some tests that Brian has dyslexia, but according to him, Brian is intelligent and not lazy. He plans for effective educational mode of teaching and learning which is suitable for Brian. This new alternative planned learning process helps the protagonist to cope with his difficulties and to participate in the class projects actively. Brian also reconceptualises his inner strength or potential as intellectual human being. He is welcomed into the friends' groups and finally becomes the part of the mainstream society.

Accidents of Nature

Accidents of Nature (2006) is a novel written by American writer Harriet McBryde Johnson who was suffering from neuromuscular disease, which made her a person with disability. She was one of the activists of Disability Rights Movement, which took place in America. Written in first person narrative mode, she has introduced a seventeen-year-old girl named Jean who has cerebral palsy and through this character, Harriet has tried to challenge traditional notions of normality and her old beliefs. Being a wheelchair user Jean always defines herself same as everyone around her. Through enormous support of her family, she is able to join a regular school. She has received an environment, which never has treated her as "disabled". She has loving friends who help her to participate in the regular activities at school. Jean has no idea about the harsh reality of people with disabilities at outside world. Soon she faces the reality when she joins a summer camp called "Crip Camp" where she meets Sara, another girl with cerebral palsy and this girl is very much rebellious against the exploitation and exclusion of people with disabilities in society. This "Crip Camp" makes huge change

in the life of the protagonist Jean where she reconceptualises or reimagine her position in the society, and it helps her to look forward in her life with new strength.

Window Boy

Andra White's novel *Window Boy* (2008) is set in 1968, before the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, when people with disabilities did not have access to the everyday experiences. The novel deals with a character called Sam Davis who is suffering from cerebral palsy; he sits beside the window of his bedroom and watches the school. He is not allowed to go to school in the beginning but later he gets admitted in sixth grade class, where no one knows how to deal with a child with cerebral palsy. With the help of the caretaker and Sam's imaginary friend Winston Churchill, Sam could enter the school and is accepted by his fellow mates. Finally, his dream of becoming a basketball coach gets fulfilled. Sam's narrative is significant for unveiling the socio-psychological barriers created by the "normal" society towards physical disabilities.

Out of My Mind

Out of My Mind (2010) is a novel written by Sharon. M. Draper, that shares story of a girl named Melody who is suffering from cerebral palsy. Written in first person narrative mode in the novel, the character Melody has described her experiences while coping with disability by herself. Though she has supportive parents, she faces discrimination at school. The novel clearly shows how the concept of "ableism" and "normality" are socially constructed ideologies, which always create barriers for the people with disabilities, and it further makes the reader reconceptualise the stereotypical ideologies and to deconstruct the concept of "ableism". Beside of Melody's own story, the writer also brings out the condition of other children with disabilities through Melody's point of view. The novel questions the medical model of

disability where people with disabilities are treated as objects. Language is an important part of discussion in the text as Melody has an interesting way of developing words. The novel further shows the use of modern technologies (machine for speaking, motorised wheelchair) in medical science, which can offer a barrier free life with better possibilities to the people with disabilities. Towards the end of the novel Melody thinks to write an autobiography by using der device. Her journey and her achievements are examples that disability is not about physical deformation rather it is the rigorous construction of the society, which tries to limit the life of people with disabilities.

Emily Included

Based on a true story, Kathleen MC Donnell's novel *Emily Included* (2011) is written from author's point of view where she is talking about a girl, Emily who is suffering from cerebral palsy and she communicates with the help of sign language and facial expressions. The novel questions the traditional approaches of medical profession where doctors treat the people with disabilities nothing but "vegetable". However, Emily's parents never treat her differently from other children around. From very young age, she is sent to Granville Children's Centre to receive speech as well as physiotherapy. She is admitted to a kindergarten school, but the school authority soon complains that Emily's behaviour is disturbing the environment of the school and asks her parents to move her to a special school. Her parents challenge the authority with the support of the Advocacy Resource Center for the Handicapped. Even after losing the fight twice, they went to Ontario Supreme Court to fight against the school authority on behalf of the whole community of people with disabilities who were not allowed to be in regular school. At the end, Emily won the case, which was a victory for the whole community of people with disabilities. The novel basically deals with the themes of

equal rights for people with disabilities, especially the rights of inclusive education, sensitisation to their needs and the integration of them into the mainstream society.

The Running Dream

The Running Dream (2011) is a novel by American writer Wendelin Van Draanen that shares the story of a girl named Jessica a runner who got into an accident, which took her right leg away from her. She starts to heal quickly but depression slips in, as she does not know how to cope with her condition. Her school friends except Fiona, stare at her and they do not know how to respond to her condition. However, her track team supported her. Jessica took help of prosthetic leg for walking and her team raise money to get a running leg, which can bring her back to the track. The novel deals with the juxtaposition of disabilities and abilities. In addition, the example is the protagonist Jessica who was an athlete in the beginning but after the accident, her few of her friends have treated her as a girl with disability. Through the help of the technoscientific medical instrument, she returns to the track. The novel also shares the story of another girl Rosa, who suffers from cerebral palsy. She is limited physically by wheelchair, but she is very much abled in her academic area, especially in math. Jessica wanted to show that the society should treat the people with disabilities in the same way they treat the abled-bodied people because every individual has some unique abilities, which we may not come to know personally. Jessica becomes good friend of Rosa, and she decides to train her so that Rosa can take part in River Run- a ten-mile run and can feel what it feels like to cross the finish line. It is difficult as she must push the wheelchair, but she does it and finally crosses the line, which gives her the hope that she can do anything, and this race is just the beginning for her.

She Is Not Invisible

She Is Not Invisible (2013) is a novel by British writer Marcus Sedgwick, which shares the story of a visually impaired girl, named as Laureth. While critically dealing with the novel, this research work has attempted to question the stereotypical approach towards the people with visual impairments in the society. The narrative itself is disabled friendly as it does not show any helplessness, weakness and functional limitation of the character with visual impairment. This novel vividly shows that how the visually impaired character of Laureth sets an alternative way to look or to understand the lives of people with disabilities, by overcoming all the social stigmas with her own efforts as well as with the help of the facilities related to accessibility that have been mentioned in the novel. From the beginning of the novel, if a normal eyed person reads it, he/she will not be able to feel that the central character Laureth is visually impaired. The narrative shows how a character without having the eyesight is competent enough to socialise or to communicate normally with the people in the society or how her lack of sight is not a kind of barrier in the process of communication or socialisation and to fit into the norms of the society.

Laughing at My Nightmare

Laughing at My Nightmare (2014) is an autobiography written by Shane Burcaw who was born with spinal muscular atrophy; it created physical abnormalities; however, this condition could not limit his intellectual capabilities. He took the courage to share his daily life experiences with sense of humour. He tried to be as cool as possible and wished to be seen as 'normal' like other teenagers outside. His sense of humour and social media presence made him popular among friends. Beside sharing his daily life experiences, he has been very bold and vocal in sharing his sexual orientation, needs and desires. The autobiography ends with Shane's romantic relationship with a girl to

take care of him while they are together. Shane discussed his sexuality and disability very openly in the book, which rarely has been discussed elsewhere in detail.

Carry the Ocean

Carry the Ocean (2015) is a novel written by Heidi Cullinan. Story is about a gay couple with different disabilities. Emmet Washington has autism spectrum disorder and Jeremy has major depressive disorder. Emmet is very intelligent in solving math problems and in computer programming; he has supporting and loving parents who understand his needs. On the other hand, Jeremy's parents did not support him with his mental health issues. Jeremy's mother is against the relationship between the two, as she thinks that Jeremy should hang out with "normal" people. Though they have different types of disabilities, they have to deal the outside world in same manner. This novel shows that people with disabilities should be given respect in terms of making decisions regarding their sexual lives. There are things, which they can do by themselves, but they may need help with something else that is normal. Jeremy and Emmet move to the Roosevelt, a place where people with different types of disabilities stay together and try to cope with it. From here, their journey begins where they start to realise that they can be loved by going beyond of their disabilities and love can heal any wound and overcome any obstacles.

This Kid Can Fly: It's about Ability (Not Disability)

This Kid Can Fly: It's about Ability (Not Disability) (2016) is an autobiography by Aaron Rose Philip, a teenager boy with cerebral palsy which affected his motor his motor skills and made him a wheelchair user. He goes to New York City to attend high school. Brilliant, adventurous, enthusiastic and ambitious boy Philip fights against physical and economic challenges having an immigrant status. On one hand his homelessness and on the other his disability with everyday experiences such as late

paratransit, broken elevator more over difficulty in socialising, made his condition worse. He clearly talks about his needs as a kid with disability, which provides an opportunity to the readers to understand the notion of disability and to show empathy towards people with disabilities. Philip has “angels” in his life who supported him for medical treatment, education and social needs. He was interested in animation; he started to write blogs, worked as motivational speaker, created a book and video named “Tanda (This Ability, not Disability)” which show the increased opportunities for the people with disabilities. The autobiography deals with Philip’s real-life experiences where he has focused on his abilities rather than the fact that he has cerebral palsy. Philip has acquired many things in his life and received love from all due to his philosophy of reimagining life with his “ability, not disability”.

Shelter the Sea

Shelter the Sea (2017) is a novel by Heidi Cullinan is the second part of the novel *Carry the Ocean* (2015). Here the narrative describes the story of the other people with disabilities who are living in Roosevelt. The novel shows how depression is intertwined with physical disabilities where a person who is not born with any deformity in body, becomes the wone later. It also shows how the government policies and public policies work for the people with disabilities and the difficulties these people face while dealing the same. When the State of Iowa restructures its mental health system and puts the independent living facility, Emmet refuses to be forced into substandard, privatised corporate care. He starts an organisation with the help of Jeremy and other friends and starts to fight. The campaigning of their organisation receives attention from the powerful opposite corporate lobbyist. Finally, Emmet relies on his skills with calculation and prediction that he can do something good for himself, Jeremy and his friends with disabilities. This novel deals with the rights of the community of people

with disabilities. The use of sign language, technologies, therapies, medicines, structure of disabled friendly workplace, concept of job mapping are some important topics for discussion in the novel. Beside this, the novel also deals with the love, respect, sexual relationship and mutual understanding between a gay couple with different disabilities, which sometimes the normal people lack in their relationships.

Born Just Right

Born Just Right (2019) is an autobiography written by Jordan Reeves who took help from her mother Jen Lee Reeves to write the book. Jordan was born without the bottom half of her left arm, and the doctors inform her parents that she was “born just right”. Jordan here has shared the challenges and struggles that come with the condition of being born with physical disabilities. However, Jordan has been brought up in such a family where she was never treated as something different from her siblings at home or classmates at school. She was not limited with her one hand. She showed her capabilities by making innovative prosthetic designs, by trying all sorts of sports at school and through mentoring other kids. Jordan has channelled all the negativity into positivity, and she is determined to create more innovations for the people just like her.

I.7 Chapter Plans

The thesis presents seven chapters including introduction and conclusion. Although references from the all-primary texts have been used in every chapter to some extent to set arguments; however, chapter three, four, five and six individually contains three primary texts for detail discussions.

Chapter I- Introduction

The introductory chapter of the research encompasses the historical context of individuals with disabilities, the origins of the Disability Rights Movement and the contributions of activists, the development of disability studies as an interdisciplinary

research domain, the evolution of literary disability studies, the methodologies employed by scholars in this field, and a detailed examination of the representation of disability in literature. This part also introduces the novels that will be analysed in the next few chapters and rest of the parts of introduction is dealing with literature review, research gap, research questions, aims and objectives, limitations and significance, methodology and chapter plans.

Chapter II- From Fancy to Fact: Disease, Disability and Literature

The second chapter of the research work is divided into several sections in which the first is about defining and understanding the notion disease, disability, impairment and difference among the three connecting ideas with the certain form of diseases and disabilities and theoretical articulation. The second section attempts to conceptualise what is “normal” and “abnormal” and what constitute the notion of “normality”. The next section is about disability theory, critical disability theories in reference to the ideas shared by different theorists and different models of disability. The fourth section is dealing with the history of Enlightenment philosophy. The fifth section talks about emerging alternative discourses relating to disability with the help of enlightenment philosophy and its impact on traditional modes of imaginings.

Chapter III- Disability and its Social and Psychological Barriers

The third chapter of the work attempts to analyse the selected novels from socio-psychological perspective on disability arguing with new socio-cultural thoughts, which have inputs to provide alternative discourse on disability. The chapter is divided into several sections; the first part is engaged with how socio-cultural and psychological barriers excluded people with disabilities from mainstream society. In the process of this discussion, it argues on standpoints, in which people with disabilities are voiceless, subjugated and subjected to different kind of social stigma taking into account the

psychological condition of the people with disabilities regarding their position of being disabled. And the rest of part of this chapter analyses the selected texts contextualising them according to previously mentioned arguments, thus attempts to set an alternative way of understanding disability through the analysis of the texts. This chapter mainly focuses on the discussion of the texts such as *Accidents of Nature* (2006) by Harriet McBryde Johnson, *She Is Not Invisible* (2013) by Marcus Sedgwick, *Window Boy* (2008) by Andra White.

Chapter IV- From Object to Subject: Independent Living and Political Intervention

The fourth chapter concentrates on the idea of Independent Living Philosophy taking into discussion dialectic between objective condition and subjectivity. This chapter attempts to dwell on the notion that subjective aspects exist in relation to the objective aspect conceptualising subjectivity and objectivity in a dialectical unity producing knowledge in solidarity with action and vice-versa. The chapter is divided into several sub-sections including introduction, the dynamics of Independent Living Philosophy, the dynamics of political intervention, autobiographical depth vs. narratives by non-disabled authors, literary theoretical lens on autobiographical writing in the selected novels, and reimagining disability narratives through alternative approaches. This chapter mainly focuses on the discussion of the texts such as *Emily Included* (2011) by Kathleen MC Donnell, *This Kid Can Fly: It's about Ability (Not Disability)* (2016) by Aaron Philips, *My name is Brain Brian* (1993) by Jeanne Betancourt.

Chapter V- Technology Enabled Narrative of Disability as an Alternative Approach

The fifth chapter of the research work investigates the intersection of disability, ableism and technology enabled narrative. The chapter challenges the traditional narrative

pattern which follows the ableist framework that represents disability as a problem, lack of something, or imperfection which needs to be “cured” or “fixed”. Further discussion in the chapter shows how technoscientific inventions in medical sciences have helped people with disabilities to gain their own voices and autonomy directly and indirectly. Therefore, this chapter attempts to refer a new alternative narrative pattern which is more technologically advanced and inclusive. This chapter mainly focuses on the discussion of the texts such as *The Running Dream* (2011) by Wendelin Van Draanen, *Born Just Right* (2019) by Jordan Reeves, *Out of My Mind* (2010) by Sharon. M. Draper.

Chapter VI- Disability and Alternative Sexuality

The sixth chapter investigates the sexual desires of people with disabilities examining how disability and sexuality is intertwined. In earlier time people with disabilities were considered as asexual or hypersexual even homosexuality was considered as a disabled condition of body and mind. However, with the progress of time, now in postmodern era all those stereotypes have been removed and people with disabilities are not considered as asexual or hypersexual anymore. This chapter mainly focuses on the discussion of the texts *Carry the Ocean* (2015) and *Shelter the Sea* (2017) by Heidi Cullinan, *Laughing at My Nightmare* (2014) by Shane Burcaw, under the impression of previously mentioned themes.

Chapter VII- Conclusion

Chapter Seven serves as the conclusion of the thesis, synthesising the complexities of present understandings about individuals with disabilities and offering solutions through the presentation of the ultimate findings of the chapters. The conclusion of the research work tries to encapsulate the overall discussion on the previous chapters by bringing them together by including the alternative ideas, narrative patterns, concepts,

discourses and scientific innovations, which are essential to reconstruct alternative understanding of disability. The conclusion attempts to offer a comprehensive sagacity on contemporary discourses on disability conciliated with alternative approaches and its varied domains moving and inducing subsisting human perceptions. Hence, the concluding chapter of the research work tries to propose insights by using the literary lenses as tools, which perhaps can generate new and optimistic mode of understanding different types of disabilities and the lives of people with disabilities.

I.8 Literature Review

Wright, Diane. *Exploring Representations of Physically Disabled Women in Theory and Literature*. Sheffield Hallam University, 2008. This thesis deals with the representation of physically impaired female bodies in literature in connection with discourses of surveillance, femineity and disability. Bothwell, John. *Portraying Disability in Modern Novel: Identity, Subjectivity and Power*. Athabasca University, 2011. This work shows the problematic of disability and how disabled people are seen in society. It is based on Coetzee's novel *Slow Man*. Barker, Clare. *Postcolonial Fiction and Disability: Exceptional Children, Metaphor and Materiality*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. It examines the relationship between postcolonial writings and disability studies. It explores the symbolic roles of disability in a variety of literature that deal with decolonisation, where the kids with disabilities commonly represents the postcolonial nation-state as "damaged" and vulnerable yet capable of drastic change. It contends that several postcolonial writings portray children with disabilities as representatives, citizens, and knowledgeable individuals by examining the physical reality and real-life experience of disability in addition to using it as a metaphor for themselves. Clark, Emily. "Re-reading Horror Stories: Maternity, Disability, and Narrative in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*." *Feminist Review*, vol. 99,

no. 1, 2011, pp. 108–124. This work has analysed the novel as a mother's story about her disabled child who is unable to tell his own story. It is also about the horror of maternity in its conception and attendant choices. Lawrence, Heidi Y. *Writing Bodies: Rhetorics of Disability in U.S. Literature*. PhD dissertation, George Mason University, 2012. It illustrates how nineteenth- and twentieth-century American writing simultaneously reflects and shapes societal perceptions of disability. Lawrence shows how recurrent literary tropes the inspirational “overcomer,” the pathetic experience, the fixable medical case act rhetorically to control real bodies with disabilities while material indications like wounds or prosthesis act as appealing writing. She proposes a disability-rhetorical method that opens and questions the discriminatory principles rooted in American culture. Daniels, Julia Nahal. *Disabled, or Not Disabled? That Is the Question*. University of Sheffield, 2013. This study aims to highlight some of the dilemmas associated with living in the in-between world of disability and challenge the binary of normal and abnormal to destabilise hegemonic practices in order to develop another way of perceiving disability to encompass its permeable boundaries. Lhotská, Radka. *Representation of Characters with Disabilities in Children's Literature*. Masaryk University Brno, 2013. This work is based on five novels *The Secret Garden*, *I Can Jump Puddles*, *Big Ben*, *Face* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. This thesis is about how the author has described the disabled characters, the role of the family and society towards the characters. It tried to examine through these novels at what extent the literary texts can show the disability experiences in reality. George, Anju Sosan. “The Politics of Representation of Intellectual Disability in Select Indian Fiction.” *Quest Journals: Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 4, no. 8, 2016, pp. 1–5. This paper is about the politics of representation of the intellectually disabled people in novels of Salman

Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Jaisree Misra and Anita Desai. Vasan, Preetha, and Ann Mariya Jose. "Understanding Disability: A Study of Sharon M. Draper's *Out of My Mind*." *IRA-International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2018, pp. 1–5. In this research paper, disability has been defined with new ideas by analysing the experiences of the character of children with disability, her relationship with her family members and society. Harris, J. *The Names of Sickness: Revising Diagnosis in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing*. PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2019. examines the representation of diseases like hysteria, consumption, and nervous disorder by 19th-century British and American women authors, including Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, Louisa May Alcott, and others, in order to reveal the gendered hierarchy of power ingrained in Victorian medical culture. By highlighting how literary form can both reflect and sabotage the medical gaze and create broader, self-authored notions of health and disease, it frames nineteenth-century women's literature as an understudied archive of counter diagnostic motion.

1.9 Research Gap

There are a large variety of scholarly, critical and evaluative works, which have been conducted on disability from different perspectives, but there is a need to re-examine it from new perspectives. Most of the works, which have been done earlier, that, are focused on the representation of disability in different field of studies such as in Sociology, Law or Legal Studies, Political Science, Education, Medical Science but in the field of literary research, it is not that much popularised till now. However, through the analysis of literary texts, representing it in an alternative way can offer a new perspective on it. Therefore, it is worthy of pursuing further research through the examination of the ways in which literary representation of disability has changed over

time, reflecting changing social attitudes towards disability while providing an inclusive environment in every sphere and to have a better understanding of the lives of people with disabilities and generating not sympathy but empathy for the people with disabilities.

I.10 Research Questions

The thesis tries to answer the following questions:

- What are the social, psychological existing in society, which do not seem to allow changes to reconstruct alternative notion of disability? How literary narratives can challenge the existing societal perceptions of disability and offer an alternative understanding?
- Being influenced by the principles of the Independent Living Philosophy, how do the contemporary literary works challenge societal norms and advocate for inclusivity through the lens of disability studies?
- What are the constitutional parameters and how they can be utilised in literary discourses on disability while dealing with some of the political propagandas emanating from the previously mentioned sections?
- What are the alternative narrative patterns that question the stereotypical narrative pattern of approaching disability in various kind of writing?
- What are the paradigms that question the traditional notion of defining disability with advanced understanding of science and technology leading to liberal form of ideological discourses and narratives on disability?
- What are the alternative imaginings contextualising some questions from psychology and sexuality specially focusing on disability?

1.11 Aims and objectives

- This research study is dealing with the different aspect of discourses coming from different branches of humanities in order to reconstruct alternatives to disability discourses. To fulfil this purpose a theoretical discourse has been used as a tool to understand narratives concerning with disability.
- This work aims to bring into consideration the progressive set of analysis, dismantling stereotypical and traditional notion of disability with the help of science, technology, and by new mode of understanding.
- The objective and foundation of this research work is to understand the ideological gap because of the huge changes that have been taken place with the passing of time concerning with disability.
- Another objective of this research work is to reconstruct alternative ideology of disability in a given space controlled by conflicting ideologies.

1.12 Research Methods and Methodology

The thesis adopts disability studies as its theoretical framework, shifting from a traditionally marginalised and discriminatory perspective to acknowledging it as a legitimate and significant field of academic inquiry. The methodology applicable to this work is basically qualitative research design where in adequate and appropriate references from the texts have been given to describe and represent human perspectives on disability. This research is initially depending on library-based work, specially focusing on primary and secondary available sources and their re-examination according to the need of the work. This thesis examines multiple points of view and differences between people critically to achieve a thorough understanding of both the underlying and individual experiences of the individuals with disabilities. This study investigates areas including disability studies, existing prejudices, biasness, exclusion,

marginalised status, and alternative approaches while integrating insights from disciplines such as, sociology, the human body and corporeal concepts and so on. This study further investigates the intricate and difficult circumstances faced by individuals who have disabilities and focuses on their abilities to overcome the same, as depicted in selected texts and the political, socioeconomic and cultural landscape. It also explores linguistic, societal, literary dimensions to achieve a more in-depth idea of the subject at hand. The present work discusses the integration of individuals both with and without disabilities in today's world, offering an integrated multidisciplinary examination of disability with the help of social model of disability, and intersectional approach of disability studies, within the realm of literary works. The procedure encompasses the employment of historical viewpoints, linguistic patterns, and contextual examination as components to interpret the literary works.

L.13 Significance and Limitations of the Study

In this research “Reconstructing” entails reevaluating a concept in an alternate or enhanced manner by questioning established narratives and offering alternative viewpoints. “Alternatives” refer to several other options or possibilities distinct from traditional or predominant ones, proposing other methods of depicting diseases and disabilities. The term “Reconstructive Alternatives” refers to techniques that are devoid of the influence of stereotyped perceptions of disability and aim to reconcile the distinction between normalcy and abnormality. A body with deformity cannot be physically transformed to resemble an able-bodied individual; nevertheless, societal perceptions may be modified to dismantle the dichotomy between “normal” and “abnormal”. The term “Reimagining” signifies a vital and innovative interaction with reality. It proposes reevaluating or reimagining an existing concept, item, or system by modifying its original structure. It embodies the human potential for change, optimism,

and metamorphosis, as well as the notion that reality is not static but subject to reinterpretation.

This research attempts to underline and identify the social, political, educational, psychological impediments, which do not seem to allow changes to reimaging alternative notions of disability. This research work has concentrated to interrogate the traditional perspective on disability with progressive form of understanding, borrowing notions from science, technology, and discourses concerning with humanities consequently leading to liberal form of ideological articulations on disabilities. It has also taken into account some social and political propaganda to reformulate notions for alternative imaginings of disability. In this process of interrogating the traditional perspective on disability or the myths/ stereotypes regarding disability this research has focused on the Enlightenment philosophy that emerged around eighteenth century being influenced by the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution. To set the progressive form of understanding this research work discusses about the impact of Independent Living Philosophy, medical and technological inventions through the narratives that offer an alternative way to look or to understand these people with disabilities by transforming them into differently abled people. To create an alternative ideology or to set new way of thinking, first, this work tries to critically judge a particular existing narrative of disability and then tries to rewrite it where it can be represented in an inclusive manner. It attempts to deconstruct the frame of defining disability in a traditional way and to reconstruct the frame by redefining disability. This research work by analysing the narratives of disability attempts to anatomise and rewrite the socio-cultural myths and ideologies that have shaped and controlled the lives of these people with disabilities over the years. As a part of literary research, this research work examines the narratives of disabilities by

focusing on the capabilities of the characters with disabilities, not on their physical deformation or malformation. By this attempt, this research work is trying to create a space for these people with disabilities, which they require to live a healthy life.

This work attempts to portray a new picture or a new understanding on disability and people with disabilities who often have been seen as marginal figures in society and literary studies. It tries to give a clear picture about the understanding of people with disability at present in comparison to the past. The arguments derived from various philosophical sources have been used to set a new perspective on the subject. The purpose of this work can be too huge but considering the time and space, it has limited itself with the select literary texts.

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