CRACKING THE SHELL OF DISABILITY IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S *ICE-CANDY-MAN* AND FIRDAUS KANGA'S *TRYING TO GROW*

Dissertation submitted to Nagaland University, Kohima Campus in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Award of the Degree of Master in Philosophy in English.

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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **CRACKING THE SHELL OF DISABILITY IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S *ICE-CANDY-MAN* AND FIRDAUS KANGA'S *TRYING TO GROW*** is a bon fide record of research work done by Miss Ruthla A. Sangtam, Regd. No.: 54/2020 N.U./M.PHIL./ENG. Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2019-2021 submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English. This dissertation has not previously formed the basis of award of any degree, diploma or other title and the dissertation represents independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my supervision.

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Abstract

Disabled people are marginalized in every society. This happens because of the lack of agency and voice. Disability Studies as an exclusive field challenges the stereotypical representation of the 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. The study is an attempt to deconstruct the constructed biased image of disability in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* and Firdaus Kanga's *Trying to Grow*. Using the theoretical perspectives of disability studies, the study looks into Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*, to show how women are doubly marginalized because of their gender. In unravels society's double standards where women are marginalized in the name of different relations. It also delineates the strength and resilience of the female characters who transcends their predicament and rises above their predators. Trying to Grow by Firdaus Kanga portrays the stereotypical representation of disabled, where the disabled people are regarded as abnormal or not human. In parallel with the novel's title, it shows the protagonist's attempts to grow inspite of the society which try to push him down. The study expounds the hardships encountered by the disabled people in the society and their ultimate triumph surmounting all difficulties.

Keywords: disability, marginalization, stereotypes, society, resilience.

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, RUTHLA A. SANGTAM, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **CRACKING THE SHELL OF DISABILITY IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S *ICE-CANDY-MAN* AND FIRDAUS KANGA'S *TRYING TO GROW*** is a bona fide record of research work done by me under the supervision of **PROFESSOR N.D.R. CHANDRA,** Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during the period of my research (2019-2021). The dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any degree, fellowship, diploma to any other universities or institutions. This is being submitted to Nagaland University for the Degree of **Master of Philosophy in English.**

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Ruthla A. Sangtam

Research Scholar

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Title	Page no.
1.	Chapter I: Introduction	1-22
2.	Chapter II: Disability Studies: An Overview	23-43
3.	Chapter III: Projection of Disability in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*	44- 63
4.	Chapter IV: Surmounting Societal Constructs in Firdaus Kanga's *Trying to Grow*	64-82
5.	Chapter V: Conclusion	83-93
6.	Bibliography	94-103

CHAPTER –I

INTRODUCTION

> As with any new discourse, disability studies must claim space in a contested area, trace its continuities and discontinuities, argue for its existence, and justify its assertions.
>
> (Davis xv)

Disability study is a movement within literary criticism and the humanities more generally that focuses on and critiques disability as it is by and large conceived, applying cultural, historical, social, and other humanities-oriented approaches to the study of disability in society. Many people associate disability with inability- with physical or mental deformities that unusually characterize and limit- and with personal misfortune. Proponents of disability studies contemplates to transform these commonly held perceptions, to show that disability is a matter of identity, an ordinary human variation like race or gender.

To begin with, we need to ask, as Susan Wendell does as to, who defines disability and for what reason. Insurance companies or government organizations, for example, may have particular administrative criteria or measures to characterize who is eligible for payments or benefits, and it may be in the interest of these providers to define disability in a narrow sense in order to save money. Likewise, laws that entitle people with disabilities to services, and children in schools who need special accommodations, may utilize different models. Surely, anyone who attempts to negotiate the administrative-legal system will often find themselves entangled in a maze of competing and conflicting definitions of what it means to be disabled, or disabled enough to qualify, whereby they fit some bureaucracies' definitions of disability and not others.

The field of disability studies, however, is not governed by such administrative-legal criteria; and in this field a discussion of definitional issues typically begins with a distinction between impairment and disability, whereby impairment alludes to a biological or physiological condition that involves the loss of physical, sensory, or cognitive function, and disability refers to an inability to perform a personal or socially necessary task because of impairment or the societal response to it. Although, it has been common in the past to use the term ‘handicap’ to refer to the social disadvantage that accrues to an individual due to an impairment or disability, ‘handicap’ as a concept is seldom utilized in scholarly or activist circles these days, largely on the grounds that it has negative connotations when used to refer to persons with disabilities as inferior or deficient in some way.

It is observed, that people with disabilities often experience prejudice and discrimination comparable to what is experienced by people of colour and other minority groups, and they are subsequently socially marginalized and disadvantaged in similar ways. It remains sadly true that people whose bodies are different from a society’s conception of a ‘normal’ or acceptable body, even when it causes “little or no functional or physical difficulty for the person who has them, constitute major social disabilities” (Wendell 44). Take the instance of facial scaring or disfigurement, “which is a disability of appearance only, a disability constructed totally by stigma and cultural meanings” (Wendell 44). Lucy Grealy, for example, whose face was deformed because of medical procedure for facial bone cancer, recalls with incredible pain the cruel stares and laughing at her appearance: “I was my face, I was ugliness,” she writes (Grealy 17). In earlier times, it was even unlawful to show up in public if one’s physical appearance offended other’s sensibilities, as on account of the so-called Ugly Laws, ordinances that were prevalent in various cities across the United States. The frequently referred to Chicago ordinance passed in 1881, which was not revoked until 1973, is a decent illustration. It read: “Any person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated, or in any way deformed, so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object, or an improper person to be allowed in or on the streets, highways, thoroughfares, or public places in this city, shall not therein or thereon expose himself to public view, under the penalty of a fine of $1 for each offence” (Schweik 1-2).

All the more, nondisabled people are often uncomfortable, even fearful, around people with disabilities, as though the disabling condition might be infectious. Robert Murphy thinks that all too many nondisabled people view people with disabilities as a fearsome possibility. They displace their apprehensions that the impairment could happen to them onto the other person. In this way, "The disabled person becomes the Other—a living symbol of failure, frailty, and emasculation; a counterpoint to normality; a figure whose very humanity is questioned" (Murphy 117). Similarly, Erving Goffman in his book *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1963) contends that the stigmatizing reactions from others serve to invalidate the disabled person as less than normal if not less than human beings. Goffman characterize stigma as a characteristic of a person who is "reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman 3). Published in the same year as Howard Becker's *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (1963), Goffman essentially framed the question within the labelling theory school of deviance, which posited that "deviance is not a quality of the act a person commits, but rather a consequence" of others' reactions (Becker 9).

On the other hand Nancy Miller and Catherine Sammons see that, it is normal for people to see other people who look different. Indeed, they contend, the human brain is designed to filter the environment and notice differences from the everyday practice or expected average:

> Everybody reacts to differences. In the whole universe of differences, some attract us, and some aren't important to us at all. Our reactions to differences are sometimes complex and confusing. We often want to be open-minded and feel comfortable about other people's differences but find that some unfamiliar differences make us feel tense and judgemental instead. We are caught off guard when someone with an unexpected difference enters the room, and we may feel awkward as we try to appear unsurprised. When we see an unsettling difference, it can cause anxiety, uncertainty, and

> even a wish to avoid the other person. (Miller and Sammons 1-2)

Miller and Sammons believes that we would all be able to figure out how to override these responses through habituation to new experiences and openness to alternative cultural norms, and in this way extend our own personal comfort zones about disability and other social differences.

All this is to say that it is important to understand ‘disability’ as a social phenomenon, an experience that cannot be decreased to the nature of the psychological impairment. Rather, it is a product of societal attitudes and the social organization of society. This view is now and again alluded to as a constructionist, or social constructionist, approach to deal with disability, which understands disability as constructed by or residing in the social environment, in contrast to an essentialist view, which understands disability as a condition that lives or is inborn in an individual’s particular impairment.

Until the disability movement was initiated in the early 1970s, individuals with disabilities were seen as medically or functionally disadvantaged. And for the most part, health and human service professionals were taught to comprehend disability as a long term result of pathology or injury. Consistent with the perspective of disability as pathology or anomaly, services for the disabled adults typically centered on individual rehabilitation or adaptation of the environment to accommodate the disabling intrinsic condition. Since the 1970s, however, alternative conceptualizations of disability have been advanced in the academic literature with legislation, policy, and habilitative and rehabilitative practices rhetorically mirroring these theoretical changes. The shift from disability as internal condition to human condition in which the disabling factor is a hostile social context has evolved and currently dominates much of the academic discourse within disability studies. Central to the social view of disability are the notions of disability culture and cultural identity, both which position disability within the political and discursive agendas of cultural diversity. Given the multiple definitions and viewpoints on the meaning of disability, how disability is explained by the people who are disabled, by providers, and by policy makers is critical in determining the nature of community services, policy, legislation, and overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

One cannot begin to approach disability studies without crediting its very existence and conceptual thrust to the contemporary Disability Rights Movement. The social movement for disability rights is an international phenomenon, however the movements in the United States and Great Britian are most remarkable for their contribution to disability studies. In the United States, this movement emerged in the context of other oppositional movements of the 1960s, such as the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Movement, Consumer Movement, and Gay and Lesbian Movement, which advocated on behalf of previously marginalized and underrepresented political constituencies. The broad cultural impulse toward minority enfranchisement and inclusion that produced the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and the Feminist Movement in the 1970s led as well to the Disability Rights Movement—expressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the most comprehensive civil rights bill yet for people with disabilities. This landmark law requires both the public and private sectors to accommodate the corporeal and functional differences we think of as disabilities. As disability has been recast as a civil rights issues, the emergent scholarly discipline of disability studies also has reframed the concept of disability by putting it in a social setting—what is called an ethnicity model—showing that the social problems and judgements of inferiority that disabled people face are produced by their interaction with a cultural environment, both material and psychological, that is at odds either with the functioning or the configuration of their bodies. Disability studies views the condition of having a disability as a social relationship characterized by discrimination and oppression rather than as personal misfortune or individual inadequacy.

Disability studies initially emerged in the academy from Sociology and has developed more recently in the Humanities where it is an area of critical inquiry that is parallel to, informed by, and overlapping with feminist studies. In its broadest sense, Disability Studies in the Humanities embraces a radical critique of disability. The fundamental premise of disability studies is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, a framework that produces subjects by differentiating and marking bodies. The comparison of bodies legitimates the distribution of resources, status, and power within a biased social and architectural environment. Accordingly, disability has four aspects: first, it is a system of interpreting bodily variations; second, it is a relationship between bodies and their environment; third, it is a set of practices that produce both the abled-bodied and the disabled; and fourthly, it is a way of describing the inherent instability of the embodied self.

As one of the newer disciplines in academia, Disability Studies has seen a colossal extension and development in little more than two decades that has moved it decisively away from the rehabilitation studies that previously marked its effective limits to the status of interdisciplinary subject that is as much at home with theory as with pragmatic solutions. It has become one of the places in which groundbreaking ideas have advanced most rapidly, proposing the sort of changes in ways of thinking that can have significant material effects in the everyday reality of people with disabilities. As of late, the powerful emergence of what has come to be called Critical Disability Studies has added new force to the theoretical impetus already at the heart of the social model, taking it in innovative directions that challenge not just simply existing doxa about the nature of disability, but questions of embodiment, identity and agency as they impact all living beings. Just as feminism, post-colonialism and queer theories have all successfully pushed out the theoretical boat. Critical Disability Studies is currently the academic site to watch. What is exciting about each of those areas is that they have forced us to re-examine everything. It is no longer a case of just adding on women or ethnic minorities to a pre-existing syllabus; the task is to ask how that changes our understanding of society in general.

Disability is a broad term within which cluster of ideological categories as varied as sick, maimed, deformed, debilitated, old, afflicted or abnormal—all of which disadvantage people by devaluing bodies that do not conform to certain social standards. Thus, disability functions to preserve and validate such privileged designation as beautiful, healthy, normal, fit, intelligent, and competent—all of which provide cultural capital to those who claim such status and reside within these social identities. It is, then, the various interactions between bodies and world that create disability from the raw material of human variation and precariousness. Disability demands a reckoning with the messiness of bodily variety, with literal individuation run amok. Because disability is defined not as a set of observable, broadly predictable traits, such as femaleness or skin colour, but rather as any departure from the physical, mental, and psychological norms and expectations of particular culture, disability highlights individual differences. In short, the concept of disability joins a heterogeneous group of people whose only commonality is being considered abnormal. As the norm becomes normal in an environment created to accommodate it, disability becomes intense, extravagant and problematic. Disability, then is the unorthodox made flesh refusing to be normalized, homogenized or neutralized. Most importantly, in an era governed by the abstract principle of universal equality, disability signals that the body cannot be universalized. Moulded by history, characterize by particularity, and at odds with its environment, disability confounds any notion of a generalizable, stable physical state of being. The cripple before the steps, the visually impaired before the printed page, the deaf person before the radio, the amputee before the typewriter, and the dwarf before the counter are all proof that the myriad structures and practices of material, daily life enforce the cultural standard of universal human being with limited range of bodily and mental variation.

In nearly all its iterations, our world is a place of compulsory able-bodiedness that insidiously excludes, stigmatizes, and devalues difference. Disability studies and its attention to the non-normative uncloak this compulsory demand for ability and strive, as Synder and Mitchell explains: “to operationalize some maneuvernability for bodies demand excessive, insufficient, or inappropriate on the basis of their impairments actual or perceived” (Synder and Mitchell 179). Disability studies likewise reveals how these insufficient bodies and persons, paradoxically, are made less visible the more they demand notice, or, as, Tobin Seibers offers: “according to the logic of compulsory able-bodiedness, the more visible the disability, the greater the chance that the disabled person will be repressed from public view and forgotten” (Seibers 7).

Since its initiation, disability studies have theorized difference in various manners. As Simi Linton clarifies that disability studies takes for its subject matter not just the variations that exist in human behaviour, appearance, functioning, sensory acuity, and cognitive processing but, more crucially, the meaning we make of those variations. The field has defined and explained this meaning-making by responding, first, to a medical model of disability. This model, while instrumental in preventing disease and enabling human vitality, has been heavily critiqued for its pathologizing of difference. Under the medical model, individual impairment remains a personal matter that disability needs to be cured and that pitiable, impaired sufferers carve the health and normality that medication may provide them. The constituency for disability studies is all of us—as disability is the most human of experiences, touching every family and potentially touching all of us. This universality of disability experience is reflected in the term ‘temporarily abled-bodied’, which serves as a reality check to those who perceive themselves to be immutably abled-bodied.

We need to study disability with regards to what we take to be the body of knowledge that narrates the story of our world and lives—the Humanities. The field of Disability Studies is fundamental not to make people comfortable in their skin, but rather to direct the formidable critical skills of higher education toward reimagining disability, seeing it with fresh eyes and in new ways. This is an important educational goal not only for the people with disabilities, but for everyone. As an academic discipline, disability study examines the meaning, nature, and consequences of disability. Initially, the field focussed on the division between ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’, where impairment was an impairment of an individual’s mind or body, while disability was considered a social construct. The first US disabilities studies program emerged in 1994, at Syracuse University. The first edition of Disabilities Studies Reader (one of the first collection of academic papers related to disability studies) was published in 1997 by Lennard Davis. The field grew rapidly over the next ten years. In 2005, the Modern Language Association established Disability Studies as a “division of study”. Out of all the diverse scholarship, the description of disability studies adopted by the Society for

Disability Studies comes maybe as close as anything to an ‘official’ definition of this new, interdisciplinary field of study:

> Disability studies recognizes that disability is a key aspect of human experience, and that disability has important political, social, and economic implications for society as a whole, including both disabled and non-disabled people. Through research, artistic production, teaching and activism, disability studies seeks to augment understandings of disability in all cultures and historical periods, to promote greater awareness of the experiences of disabled people, and to advocate for social change. (M. Ferguson 71)

Still, despite such attempts at official definitions, it is probably not surprising that certain messiness came to characterize the usage of the term ‘disability studies’. It became somewhat unclear whether disability studies could be framed as coherent and definable, if multidisciplinary, field of academic endeavour. As an ever increasing number of academic programs began to spring up using the label of disability studies, disagreements began to emerge about who could and who could not make legitimate use of the term. A growing list of inquiries came to accompany almost any introductory discussion of this new approach. The term ‘disability studies’ became contested precisely because of the power and insight found in the developing body of research and commentary that popularized the term.

Simi Linton in her influential introduction to disability studies, has a chapter named “Disability Studies/Not Disability Studies”, in which she makes an all encompassing argument for setting off disability studies as a socio-political-cultural assessment of disability from the interventionist approach that describe the dominant traditions in the investigation of disability. For Linton, it is important to have boundaries about how and where legitimate disability studies could be possible. Regardless of that argument, the use of the term ‘disability studies’ to characterize numerous new or restructured academic programs and research initiatives based within those dominant traditions, for instance, special education, healthcare, and human services has continued to grow over the last decade or so.

To locate the core of disability studies, it is simpler to start by offering some expressive comments about what disability studies is not—or at least should not be—rather than what it is. It should be evident that the term 'disability studies' should not be permitted to become little more than a synonym for special education or rehabilitation sciences. Nor should the term become interchangeable with research into community support and comprehensive education. It is also important to understand that disability studies is not equivalent to disability rights, albeit the two are closely related. Disability studies may be many things to many people, however if its full potential to reshape the way that society understands people with disabilities is to be realized, then it should try not to seen as simply a new bottle of wine.

If there are some characteristics or elements that most researchers arguably identify as not part of the field of disability studies, then it is equally true that there are different features which are regarded as its core concepts. These are topics and contentions that are essential to the theory and practice of disability studies as to be at the core of any discussions about its relevance for any specific program or content area. The idea which put some flesh on to the bare bones of rhetoric about what is unique and significant about disability studies are that: the study of disability must be social; the study of disability must be foundational; the study of disability must be interdisciplinary; the study of disability must be participatory; and the study of disability must be value-based.

Just as gender is more than chromosomes and race is more than skin color, disability is more than an individual impairment. This basic assertion is one version of what is perhaps, the one firmly associated with disability studies that has gained the greatest familiarity and even acknowledgement within the academy: the so-called 'social model' of disability. Normally contrasted with the 'medical' or 'deficit' model, the social model has become one of those umbrella terms—indeed, much like the term 'disability studies' itself—that has a broad recognition and understanding, while also being constantly debated by those who find one or another of its usages problematic. The World Health Organisation (WHO) in its International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Disease, acknowledges the idea of merging it with the more traditional medical model. The WHO definition of this concept summarizes the most common understanding of the social model:

> Disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. Hence the management of the problem requires social action, and it is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the changes necessary for full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life. (World Health Organisation 28)

What the WHO definition leaves implied but unstated is that the concept of the social model requires not merely social action but social analysis as well. The importance of the social model as a core concept of disability studies is not only that disability is more than individual pathology and deficit but also that its meaning is more than a personal problem. Disability must be studied in its social, cultural and historical context as much as the personal conditions of impairment and functioning must be studied in their medical and educational contexts.

This does not have to be an either –or proposition. Most scholars in disability studies readily acknowledge the personal reality of impairments. Studying the social history of intellectual disability does not mean that the personal experience is irrelevant. Indeed, much recent writing has urged renewed attention to the ‘embodiment’ of disability. Nor does the emphasis on the social model negate the importance of medical and educational research on diagnostics, assessments, treatments, and interventions. Even with these more traditional approaches to the health and education of individuals with specific impairments, however, disability studies can contribute a social perspective from which to view and interpret scientific findings. Indeed, for most disability studies scholars, this is not really a choice. All research, all knowledge exists unavoidably in a cultural and historical context. The solitary decision is in how openly that context is acknowledged and explored.

It is certainly the case that scholars in disability studies contend that their approach to disability and impairment is crucial to deepening our understanding of how that status is experienced in society. However, disability studies also makes the contention that perhaps the most important reason to explore the meaning(s) of disability is not to understand disability itself but to understand other categories of human difference. All in all, the study of disability and the concept of ‘disability’ are at the foundation of understanding the social construction of race, gender, class, and other ways in which we differentiate ourselves from one another. It is fundamental, in short, to our understanding of how we see ourselves as same and different.

Throughout history, the label of ‘disability’ has functioned as an allegation more often than an evaluation. In a review of how discrimination against African Americans and women has been justified at various times in American history, the historian Douglas Baynton makes this claim overt that not just has it been considered legitimate to treat disabled people unequally, but the concept of disability has been utilized to justify discrimination against other groups by attributing disability to them. In the opposition to suffrage and women’s rights in the early part of the twentieth century, male politicians and others would cite the feebleness and instability of women for the most part as reasons to shield them from the responsibilities of voting, running for political office, or learning a profession. The medicalized racism the same era was used to bolster the rise of Jim Crow law and policies in the South and anti-Mexican laws in the West. The symbolism of disability has consistently been utilized to represent the dangerous and inferior. The concept of disability is used to shroud what scares us, to eliminate what repulses us, and to medicalize what shocks us. The logic was irrefutable. Disability was the ultimate ‘other’.

From various perspectives, disability continues, by definition, to be a lesser condition of being that justifies paternalism at best and extermination at worst. To apply that label to the LGBT community, to the homeless poor, and to those who do not speak English is to justify the practices of exclusion and neglect that are still tacitly comprehended as a legitimate corollary of the disability status. In opposition, those being labelled often challenge the accuracy of the attribution but seldom challenge the logic behind the accusation. In discussions of current social issues such as the overrepresentation of certain racial groups in special education, the problem is analyzed primarily as an instance of systematic racism without an equal review of the negative assumptions about disability that make the concept understandable as source of exclusion. Disability—and the concept of disability—must be part of the very foundation of attempts to understand what is different as well as what is normal.

If disability is social and foundational, then the efforts to understand the experience and concepts behind that status must cut across traditional academic disciplines. Disability studies demands that the study of disability must be as broad as culture itself. The tools and traditions of all our ways of knowing about the world must be drawn. In many ways, the best analogy is to similar interdisciplinary fields such as women's studies or race and ethnic studies. Just as these more established fields have drawn upon the history and sociology of women and the concept of femininity or the cultural and literary representation of African Americans, so does disability studies look for ways to explore the meanings of disability as it emerges in all academic departments. In its early days, this core of disability studies was focussed on the need to bring the study of disability into the Arts and Humanities, and areas of the Social Sciences other than Psychology. In making that case, the impression was sometimes given that disability studies could only exist within these non-applied disciplines. Efforts to legitimize the study of disability outside of applied fields such as special education and social work, sometimes led to attempts to delegitimize the practice of disability studies within those same traditional fields. In part, this was an understandable response to the traditional domination of those traditional fields in the study of disability. Special education and rehabilitation sciences had been seen by many as owning the topic of disability in a way that disability studies scholars wanted to challenge. At the same time, many academics within the applied sciences associated with disability would often see calls for interdisciplinarity as meaning that general education experts should interact with special education experts. History, literature, philosophy, art, and other fields within the Humanities are seen as supplemental interests to the main goal of learning how to teach and how to support individuals with disabilities. The worry, then, by some within the Humanities and Social Sciences was that allowing the mantle of disability studies to be assumed by these same professional schools would co-opt the truly reformative potential of this newly critical approach. Those worries remain, and the disciplinary tensions that accompany those concerns will also continue. At this juncture, a truly interdisciplinary (and not just multidisciplinary) disability studies can only flourish if the orientation and insights it makes possible are available to all parts of the academy.

The concept which advocates for the study of disability to be participatory is probably familiar and endorsed by the members of TASH and other progressive disability research and advocacy organizations. Still, the call for increased participation and influence by people with disabilities and their families with what is taught and explored about disability is one that disability studies has greatly emphasized, if nor originated. The call for participation is not just about what questions get asked, but who gets to ask the questions. The point is not just to have new types of research and teaching about disability but that scholars with those disabilities should be prominent among those doing that research and teaching.

However, this concept becomes somewhat more contentious when taken beyond superficial rhetoric. What does ‘participation’ truly mean in terms of scholarship? More specifically what might participation mean for people with intellectual disabilities? Should disability studies research always be action-oriented, as with participatory action research or can it sometimes be primarily analytical or historical in focus? Is ‘participation’ enough, or does disability studies researches have an obligation to be ‘emancipatory’ in effect? In part, this touches on one of the central tensions in disability studies scholarship: What is or should be the role of the non-disabled researcher/teacher within the field of disability studies? Just as it would be odd if women’s studies programs were led primarily by men or European Americans were the most prominent faces in African American scholarship, so it would be surprising only if those within disability studies took no notice of the disability status of those whose voices were most prominent. At the same time, the brief history of disability studies is full of examples of scholars without disabilities making significant contributions to the field.

The study of disability must be value-based. This principle is also one that is familiar to the members of TASH. One of the changes that have occurred within the various domains of teaching and research is that the notion of values-based research has become widely accepted, even within the hardest of sciences. It is now standard practice to use and report social validity measures within traditionally quantitative and behavioural research. Within disability studies, there have come more dramatic claims for advocacy as inseparable from progressive scholarship of any kind. At either end of this spectrum of research practice, the legitimacy of some consideration of ethical implications within all approaches to knowledge about people with disabilities is accepted by most scholars.

As with the principle of participation, however, the emphasis on values-based research quickly becomes complicated. For many within disability studies, the overt values base takes the form of significant critical analysis of traditional disability-oriented programs and professions. If ‘special education’ and ‘rehabilitation’ are not exactly ‘four-letter words,’ they are at least viewed skeptically by some as signifiers of a formal service system that is known mainly for its oppression and pathologization of children and adults with disabilities. For those living their professional lives in the midst of these systems, critical of the failures while striving for reform, such a blanket dismissal of the helping professions can seem dismissive of the real needs of real individuals for the sake of ideological purity.

The proponents of Disability Studies characterize disability as an identifying category and the disabled as a cultural minority. They reject the negative labels and connotations of abnormality, misfortune and even deviance typically associated with disability and argue that disability is a social construct, a way of differentiating, evaluating, and classifying bodies. From the critical vantage point of disability studies, disability is a cultural significant interpretative and representational system, not just a medical problem or set of classified handicaps, and thus a subject appropriate for wide ranging intellectual inquiry instead of a subspecialty within medicine, rehabilitation, or social work. It examines the historical formation of the social identity ‘disabled’ pointing out that it covers a wide range of physical, mental, and emotional variation such that it encompasses a large and diverse group of people who actually have little in common. Disability studies also considers the history of how disability influences and is influenced by power, status and distribution of resources; changes in the way disability has been interpreted over time and within varying cultural contexts; the impact of institutionalizing disabled person versus integrating them into the community; the political and material implications for all people of the practice of assigning value to bodies, and how disability affects artistic production.

Critical analyses of disability flourish in literary criticism often focussing on how disability operates thematically in the text and/or influenced the author’s life and work. Practitioners have demonstrated the influence of disability on the literary production of countless writers. Theorizing disability responds not only to the recent emphasis on discourse analysis, social constructionism, and the politics of inclusion but also to an increasing scholarly interest in representation of the body and the relationship of those representations to subjectivity and identity. Efforts to recover the history of disabled people are part of the shift in the practice of social history from studying the powerful and the elite to focussing on perspectives and contributions of the previously marginalized.(Murfin and Supriya M. Ray 112).

In the mid-1990s, Lennard J. Davis *Enforcing Normalcy* (1995) and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s *Extraordinary Bodies* (1997) were both foundational texts in the development of the new subject area. Each brought analytical tools from literary studies and critical and cultural theory to bear on disability representation, and each established core critical terms that helped shape the development of the discipline. Both Davis and Garland focussed on the power of the idea of the normal—‘normalcy’ in Davis, ‘the normate’ in Garland-Thomson—in definitions of disability. If disability was judged to be a state of negative difference, then the normal was central mode from which it deviated. As both showed, normalcy and the normate are ideological and bureaucratic constructions, defining a subject position that might appear to be straightforward and understood by all, but in fact is a fabricated state that disavows difference. As Davis asserted: “[t]o understand the disabled body, one must return to the concept of the norm, the normal body” (Davis 23). And it is the idea of the normal body, developed through methods of measurement, testing, and their bureaucratization, that—for Davis—sets up the implication that “the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the normal,” and as a consequence, “when we think of bodies, in a society where the concept of the norm is operative, then people with disabilities will be thought of as deviants” (Davis 29). In a memorable phrase, Davis then concluded that “the ‘problem’ is not the person with disabilities: the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the ‘problem’ of the disabled person” (Davis 24).

Garland-Thomson, outlining her concept of the normate, noted that something that seems as if it should be everywhere—the normal—is in fact almost impossible to find. The normate is, she observes, “constructed identity of those who, by way of the bodily configurations and cultural capital they assume, can step into a position of authority and wield power it grants them.” But, she goes on, if any attempt is made to actually define what this position or identity is, “what emerges is a very narrowly defined profile that describes only a minority of actual people” (Garland-Thomson 8). The normal is than a set of rules that is always disappearing over the horizon, an illusion masquerading as fact. As a result, Garland-Thomson notes, disability is “not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do” (Garland-Thomson 6).

In his seminal study, *Disability Theory*, Tobin Siebers aims to “define the ideology of ability and to make its workings legible and familiar, despite how imbricated it may be in our thinking and practices, and despite how little we notice its patterns, authority, contradictions, and influence as a result” (Siebers 9). The idea of ability, Siebers further explains, “is at its simplest the preference for abled bodiedness. At its most radical, it defines the baseline by which humanness is determined” (Siebers 5).

Many of the metaphors that accompanied literary representations of characters with disabilities were, this new scholarship made clear, invested in these ideas of rules or of deviations from the norm. Every character in popular fiction who was understood to be criminal because of, say, a facial disfigurement, or heroic because they challenged the perceived limitations that come with living ‘confined to’ a wheelchair, could now be seen to be products of ableist cultural assumptions about what kind of body or mind was normal and what were seen to be the terms of any difference from such norms. These new critical approach made it clear that, in such thinking disability is figured as a deficit, defined by what is not, rather than understood as its own mode of being. Ableism thus took its place alongside patriarchy, sexism, racism, homophobia, and colonialism; and literary/cultural disability studies formed part of the ongoing critical description, and deconstruction, of these power systems and the ways in which they produced cultural narratives that wrote disability. In 2000, David T. Mitchell and Sharon Synder’s book *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* unpacked how such ableist assumptions operated in the specific arena of narrative. Their key term “narrative prosthesis” highlighted how texts use and rely on disability to make narrative work. The phrase, they wrote, “is meant to indicate that disability has been used throughout history as a crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insights” (Mitchell and Synder 47). Such a process was Mitchell and Synder asserted, a ‘proposal discursive dependencies,’ and they noted that, “disability pervades literary narrative, first as a stock feature of characterization and, second, as an opportunistic metaphorical device” (Mitchell and Synder 49).

Since the publication of these seminal books, there have been huge amounts of growth in the field of literary and critical disability studies. Both Tobin Siebers, in *Disability Aesthetics* (2010) and Ato Quayson, in *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (2007), points to disability’s pivotal role in complicating and enriching notions of the aesthetic because of the difference disabled bodies and minds bring to the process of representation. Quayson, for instance, observes a kind of dissonance or ‘nervousness’ at the level of form itself when disability enters a narrative; working as a part of a text’s structural and symbolic apparatus, with specific narrative functions, disability also accesses the “active ethical core” of a text since it can have “a direct effect on social views of people with disability in a way that representations of other literary details, tropes, and motifs do not offer" (Quayson 19). The relationship between the aesthetic, the political, and the ethical implications of disability representation is an ongoing concern within literary and cultural disability studies, but such works on aesthetics and narrative theory has pushed the field beyond making distinction between 'positive' and 'negative' representations toward a better understanding of the complex nature of many disability narratives. Also, a focus on disability can also help to understand how the process of writing, reading, or performing a work of literature is an embodied one, encountered differently according to variances in attention, energy, and technologies of reading, writing, and speaking. As disability critics have helped show, narrative structure and style may be shaped directly by disabled embodiment- whether that be a stammer, a cognitive difference, or the discrete grammars and conventions of sign languages or digital assistive devices. Thinking about 'disability aesthetics' can fundamentally change our understandings of literature: what a story looks like; how a poem should sound; what we consider to be beautiful.

Disability studies challenges the traditional structures and assumptions on which they are founded. Instead of perceiving disability as a deficit, disability studies scholars assert that disability is caused "by the failure of society to remove its disabling barriers and social restrictions, in other words [...] disability is something wrong with society" (Oliver 129). Wendell criticises the non-disabled's obsession with prevention and cure that "focus public attention on the medical model, which leads us to ignore the social conditions that are causing or increasing disability among people with impairments" (Wendell 31). The dominant paradigm that medicalizes disability is directly challenged by advocates of the social model who have sought new ways of conceptualizing disability. The former paradigm has reigned since the rise of the medical profession in Western society, while the latter is ideologically located in a framework of social change akin to the Civil Rights movement pioneered by African-Americans in the 1950s.

In many ways disability studies is a relatively new discipline, exploring different ways of thinking about the world in relation to the phenomena of ‘disability.’ As such, disability studies does not claim to be a unified field of inquiry, but rather reflects multiple perspectives simultaneously. And while the social model is the primary conceptual framework within emerging canon of disability studies, its own hegemony is challenged within. Shakespeare feels the social model is overly simplistic and needs a more complex definition that considers various social phenomena because “people with impairment are disabled, not just by material discrimination, but also by prejudice. This prejudice is not just impersonal, it is also implicit in cultural representation, in language and in socialization” (Shakespeare 296). While concurring material social barriers exist, Shakespeare also raises questions about attitudes toward people with disabilities and how attitudes are formed. Wendell points out that in their haste to challenge the medical model, some disability scholars may contribute to replacing one restrictive paradigm with another, minimizing the complexities of disabilities, and neglecting the medical connection altogether—which is, in fact, a large part of reality for many people. She writes: “We must learn how to live with the suffering body, with that which cannot be noticed without pain, and that which cannot be celebrated without ambivalence” (Wendell 332).

However, these conversations typify discussions in the emerging field of disability studies, reflective of a common desire for multidimensional and critical understandings of disability, hitherto neglected in dominant scientific-medical paradigms. People with disabilities have reason to mistrust traditional research methodologies of conceptual framework of disability, characterizing them as “at best irrelevant, and at worst, oppressive” (Oliver 130). Prevailing scientific-medical notions of prevention and cure associated with disabilities deflect attention from the actual lived experience of disabled people, while simultaneously fostering strong associations of pity and patronization thereby effectively furthering oppression.

Disability study is therefore an academic discipline invested in challenging traditional thinking. At its core is an increasing number of people with disabilities—they may be scholars, research participants, or both—speaking from the center stage, with and without abled-bodies allies. This central positioning gives rise to opportunities for the non-disabled to establish a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed. In redefining ‘disability’ and ‘normalcy,’ scholars in disability studies challenges the presumed hegemony of the non-disabled; the namers are now questioned by the named. As Hooks points out, the privileged act of naming:

> Often affords those in power to access modes of communication and enabled them to project an interpretation, a definition, a description of their work and actions, that may not be accurate, and that may obscure what is really taking place. (Hooks 62)

Representation of disability in the Indian context has been arguably marked by an awareness of stigmatization and othering of the disabled people in Indian societies. The fictional representations of disability in India contain two major tendencies: depictions of the stigmatic social construction of disability and the disabled person’s perceptions of themselves and their disability. The present dissertation attempts to explicate the representations of disability in the works of Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man* and Firdaus Kanga’s *Trying to Grow*, with the primary objective of critically assessing the represented forms of the underlying patterns of social stigma and self-perception associated with disability in the Indian context. The study of disability as presented in the Indian novels in English attempted in this dissertation can be approached as part of the broad, interdisciplinary realm of Disability Studies. The study of disability in the select fictional works from Indian literature in English as pursued in this dissertation necessitates a broad survey of representation of disability in general and the stigmatic precepts in the Indian context as reflected in Indian writings over the years. Literature, particularly, fiction, of almost all ages from across the world abounds with multifarious portrayals of disability and their ramifications in different cultures and communities. Approached from the perspective of disability studies, the ‘disabled’ female gender is taken as the focal issue in Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man*. The main objective here is not only to foreground femininity and disability but also to fathom its implications when both these come under the patriarchial hegemony. The disabled female body is viewed as a phenomenon brought about by a hegemonic, patriarchial system. The question of representing the stigmatized perceptions of disability is very vividly addressed in Firdaus Kanga's *Trying to Grow*. It is arguably the first full-length treatise on a person suffering from physical disability in Indian fiction in English. The main thrust of the novel is to depict the hero's attempts to find an identity exclusively for him. Both the novels in discussion that is *Ice-Candy-Man* and *Trying to Grow* are understandably derived from the first-hand experiences of the facets of disability encountered by its authors.

CHAPTER-II

DISABILITY STUDIES: AN OVERVIEW

The field of literature is immensely vast when it comes to the exposition of the contents it both encapsulates and amalgamates. These have been different shades and shadows of depictions of myriad nuances which do not necessarily pertain to one specific topic or theme. It is the encapsulation of each and every attribute of the human society at large that, in a nutshell, greatly forms the entire broader core of the word literature in general. Talking about the all-encompassing nature of literature, it would really be unfair not to state precisely the inclusion of the traits of human beings because literature is nothing but the precise and sheer portrayal of the mundane society of the for-footed being called as human beings. In relation to the different traits of human beings, there are also certain features which are generally considered as having some kind of negative effects. Those impairments, if they can be called as, greatly hamper both the psychological and the physical state of a particular individual.

The field of study which is associated with various kinds of disabilities of human beings is generally seen to be one of the integral parts of the human world. There is the involvement of general concerns for those who are affected coupled with utmost care which sometimes even give way to empathizing with an individual who has been inflicted with some kind of a disability. And all these very well and truly find accurate representation in numerous fictional pieces in literature. There is no better place than literature to make an evaluation of the various kinds of situations which a disabled person has to undergo from time to time. To make a rudimentary understanding of the concept of disability, the preliminary definition given by the World Health Organisation (WHO) can very easily be considered. According to World Health Organisation: “Disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. Hence the management of the problem requires social action, and it is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the changes necessary for full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life" (W.H.O. 28).

The above definition sums up the basic idea which is inherent in the concept of various studies which are associated with any kind of disability for that matter. If there are traits of an individual which are disabled finding expression in one of the important fictions, there are some kinds of physical organs which are shown to be not normal in the other. After all, these are all conditions which really come out to the forefront when it comes to understanding the basic intricacies at the level of a particular society. Talking about society, there is also one very important negative picture in relation to the society when it comes to comprehending the studies associated with disability at the level of a society. Thus basic detrimental effect is generally seen in the field of the very process of construction of the very phenomenon of disability to be something a quite out of the world rather than treating the same as a pretty much normal attribute of an individual. So, even in this field, there is the process of the construction of a particular form of abnormality which further relegates the affected person to an even marginalized position. Kuppers writes:

Disability culture is the difference between being alone, isolated, and individuated with a physical, cognitive, emotional or sensory difference that in our society invites discrimination and reinforces that isolation—the difference between all that and being in community. Naming oneself part of a larger group, and to understand that solidarity can be found—precariously, in improvisation, always on the verge of collapse. (Kuppers 109)

Throughout human history, people with disability have existed on the margins of society. This different treatment towards people with disabilities has been given the term 'ableism'. Thomas Heir in the Harvard Educational Review finds the following description of ableism by scholars before him:

> A pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional and physical disabilities [...] Deeply rooted beliefs about health,

> productivity, beauty, and the value of human life, perpetuated by the public and private media, combine to create an environment that is often hostile to those whose physical, mental, cognitive, and sensory abilities [...] fall out of the scope of what is currently defined as socially accepted. (Hehir 23)

How do we define what is socially acceptable? The answer to that lies in philosophy and language. The very concept of disability stems from the creation of the term ‘human’. People who live physical, intellectual, psychosocial, or any other type of disability have often been deemed to be not fully human or worse, animals with human faces. The idea that there is some sort of norm when it comes to the human body creates then the designation of people deviating from that normal. There is the able body and anything without complete, perfect use and command over what are considered to be normal abilities for a person are then deemed disabled. More troubling is the answer of many philosophers to the question of what makes humans different from animals. The longstanding tradition in philosophy ranging from Plato to Kant is that humanity’s ability to reason distinguishes us from animals. This becomes problematic when people begin talking about intellectual disability. Individuals with intellectual disabilities have often been regarded as unable to form rational thoughts or to reason thus rendering them as inhuman. Philosophy has not been the only discipline to contribute to the exclusion of people with different abilities.

In its broadest sense, disability can be defined as a physical, cognitive, sensory, emotional, psychological, and/or developmental impairment or restriction. The category has further expanded to include chronic pain and fatigue, brain trauma, neurodiversity, and other less visible conditions. The broad umbrella of disability includes disability that occur at birth or those that occur later in life; as disabilities studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson puts it: “Disability is the most human of experience, touching every family and if—we live long enough—touching us all” (Garland-Thomson 5). Given the breadth and diversity of disabled individuals, disability culture, and disability communities, disability studies investigates the political, social, economic, artistic, historical, and theoretical impact and experience of disability in society. This field, which is both academic and grounded in the lived experience of people with disabilities and their allies, has theorized the ways in which culture defines and understands disability with the goal of not only exploring what it means to be disabled but also recognizing the ways in which disability is represented, what it signifies, and what the stakes of such meanings and representations are in articulating and fighting for disability rights.

There are two general ways of understanding the experience of disability in our culture: the medical model and the social model. In the medical model of disability, an emphasis is placed on the “problem” with the person and his or her body; a medical approach to disability is focused on diagnosis, treatment, management, therapy, and cure for the problems associated with the disability. This model is sometimes referred to as the individual model because it is concerned primarily with a cure for a specific individual and his or her impairment(s). Although medical support and intervention can be important to many people with disabilities, the medical model for understanding disability has been criticized for “othering” the person by framing impairments as defects or pathologies that set him or her apart from normal. Furthermore, the model has been criticized for placing blame and responsibility on the individual, who is understood to be in need of a medical cure.

In contrast to the medical model, the social model of disability defines impairment not in terms of any particular body and its limitations but instead in terms of the restrictions imposed by environment and cultures. Rather than focussing on a cure for atypical bodies and minds, this model advocates for social and political change, legislation, and accessibility adaptations that make the world more open to bodies and minds of all kinds. Thus, the social model—also called the sociopolitical or relational model—is less interested in normalizing any particular characteristic or diagnosis and more concerned with correcting the exclusionary obstacles created by society. The social model argues that disability is not the result of the body or mind of an individual but rather of exclusion from society.

For example, in the instance of a person with a physical impairment that limits mobility, the medical model would focus on the individual’s mobility issues with a goal of helping him or her walk through the assistance of medical technologies and therapies so that he or she could become less restricted in movement. The individuals would be seen as disabled, and the focus would be on helping them adjust to their world. On the other hand, the social model would focus on changing the environment instead of the individual—making sure that there were adequate sidewalk curb cuts, well-placed ramps, wide doorways, elevators, and accessible restrooms so that individuals could be less restricted in going about their day given their atypical mobility. The individual would be seen as having an impairment, but he or she would only be disabled insofar as the environment was limiting. The social model would further expand this idea of structural access to include other types of integration such as legal protections against discrimination in employment, transportation, and housing and/or social change to eliminate negative practices such as stereotyping, name-calling, and hate speech and acts. Furthermore, the social model would insist that the work of creating an accessible environment should be done by all members of society, for all members, putting the responsibility for access on the group rather than the individual.

In describing these models for understanding disability in broad strokes, it is easy to see them in oppositional terms and to understand why the social model has come to be preferred by most disability rights scholars and activists. However, there are many gray areas between the two models and many approaches that exist outside or instead of this dichotomy. For example, although the social model emphasizes shared responsibility for creating accessible environments, a part of that work takes place in the medical realm, with the insistence on medical transparency, patient rights, advances in options for medical and therapeutic interventions, and collaboration between medical professionals and individuals with disabilities. Many people with disabilities want medical and assistive technologies, but they also advocate for patient-centered medical experience in which they take leadership in deciding which interventions are right for them. Still, by outlining the distinctions between the medical and social models of disability, disability studies makes transparent the ways in which disability can be defined not only as an embodied experience specific to an individual but also as a social one affecting us all.

Although disability has always been a core aspect of human experience, disability studies and activism as a field of study and a political movement emerged out of and alongside the Civil Rights, Women's Rights, and Gay Rights movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Notably, the social model of disability reflected the influence of these other minority model frameworks—black, feminist, gay activities argued that their exclusion from mainstream society was grounded not in any intrinsic flaw in their race, gender, or sexuality but, instead, in the racism, sexism, and homophobia of the dominant culture. Building on and dovetailing with this work, disability rights activists similarly demonstrated that their exclusion was grounded in external ableism and oppression at the level of society rather than some essential inability at the level of the individual.

In aligning with and participating in other movements, the disability rights movement made strides toward the idea of a disabled minority group and culture—a political category, in keeping with the social model of disability and in contrast with the old medical model. Activist groups such as Disabled in Action and the Center for Independent Living foregrounded the voices and needs of activists with disabilities: the Center for Independent Living became a leader in the independent living movement by insisting that "people with disabilities are the best expert on their lives" and creating peer and community models for making colleges accessible for all; Disabled in Action's slogan "Nothing about us, without us!" captures their mission of eliminating barriers for people with disabilities in a movement led by people with disabilities themselves. Notably, these examples focus on structural and institutional change, not individual medical interventions.

At colleges and universities, Feminist and Women's studies, African American studies, Chicano studies, and Gay and Lesbian studies programs began to be formed in the 1960s and 1970s in response to these activists movements and the momentum they created; disability studies again followed this model, participating in the work of creating critical and theoretical understandings of identity that was flourishing in the 1980s. In 1986, the Society for Disability Studies was founded, and the society's journal, *Disability Studies Quarterly*, was the first peer-reviewed academic journal in disability studies. A critical turning point for the disability rights movement in the United States came with the passage of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, which extended legal protection against discrimination and legislated the enforcement of accessibility requirements in public and workplace environments.

The 1990s further saw growth in the field of disability studies, with the formation of the first disability studies program at Syracuse University (1994) and at the University of Illinois at Chicago (1998). In 1996, the first edition of *The Disability Studies Reader* was published, edited by Lennard J. Davis. In 2005, the Modern Language Association (MLA) formally established disability studies as an official division of study. By 2008, there were at least thirty-five programs or departments offering degrees in disability studies, with many others offering certificates, minors, connections, emphases, or courses in the field. This proliferation of disability studies programs and solidification of the field in academia was matched by other developments in identity-based scholarship since the 1990s, particularly in Critical Race theory, Queer theory, and Gender/Tran* studies, which expanded and exploded existing Women studies and Ethnic studies programs.

From their creation, these academic programs have been different from canonical or traditional fields and disciplines because of their direct link to activist movements; they have in common the balance between theory and praxis, legislation and lived experience, and scholarship and social justice. Thus disability studies is simultaneously interested in theorizing the body and in advocating for antidiscrimination legislation to help people with disabilities while resisting pressure to fetishize normalcy as a goal, just as Gender studies is simultaneously interested in denaturalizing sex and gender and in advocating for gender equality while dissenting from heteronormative narratives. In doing both types of work inside and outside of academia, identity-based fields place value on scholarship and activism and recognize that the two are often one and the same. Given these shared commitments, identity-based scholarship and activism are at their best when interdisciplinary and intersectional.

When literary scholars turned their attention to disability, they discovered it, like gender and race, all around them. With no acknowledged corpus of disability literature, they began mostly to explore the numerous ways that disability operates in canonical works and in culture, often in their scholarship deftly moving between the two. One of the first topics they took on was not disability per se but its seeming opposite, normalcy, which they revealed often to be socially formed and to have enormous influence. In *Enforcing Normalcy*, Lennard J. Davis put normalcy on the table for critical investigation, much as scholars in critical race studies had begun studying whiteness, a previously invisible, unremarked concept. Although normalcy might seem something constant and neutral, Davis showed that the word 'norm' with its present meaning arose only in the mid-nineteenth century with the Industrial Revolution and the advent of statistics. He went on to connect the ideology of normalcy with notions of progress and with eugenics, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century movement that attempted to decrease the number of unfit people in the population. Davis suggested that nineteenth century novels often reinforce the idea of the norm by featuring protagonists who are ordinary, non-heroic citizens, while disabled characters like Hippolyte in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* or Tiny Tim in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, typically have marginal characters. In this way, the very structure of the nineteenth century novel upholds normalcy. He developed this point further in 2002, arguing that a binary distinction between normal and abnormal underpins the rise of the novel.

Others scholars in literary disability studies further developed these ideas about the formation of the norm. Drawing on Erving Goffman's insights, in *Extraordinary Bodies*, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson coined the term 'normate' to describe an idealized position that has a dominance and authority in society. The normate is formed through contact with unconventional bodies of all types. For instance, people with severe congenital disabilities have served as "icons upon whom people discharge their anxieties, convictions, and fantasies" and rectify their own sense of ordinariness (Rosemarie Garland-Thomson 56). Extending Davis and

Thomson’s ideas, David Mitchell and Sharon Synder argued in *Narrative Prosthesis* that canonical authors frequently rely on disability as a narrative device both to give their fictions energy and ultimately to reaffirm normalcy in their works. They outlined several stages of this process. First, in such literature disability calls for an explanation, inaugurating the narrative act: “the unknownability” of disability “consolidates the need to tell a story about it,” they observed (Mitchell and Synder 6). Next, narratives offer an account of the causes and consequences of the disability; they bring the disability from the margin into the center of the story; and finally, they cure, rehabilitate, or eliminate the deviance in some ways, restoring a sense of order. Calling their theory “narrative prosthesis” because such narratives employ disability as a sort of crutch, they showed how it functions in works as disparate as Melville’s *Moby Dick* (1851) and Dunn’s *Geek Love* (1989). Like Lennard J. Davis, Mitchell and Synder contended that narratives often buttress the norm. These foundational works in literary disability studies argued that literature and culture in the West often upheld normalcy and consigned disabled people to the margins, a dynamic that had real world consequences for disabled people. Subsequently, some disability studies critics extended normalcy more explicitly to ability and abled-bodiedness. Drawing on queer theory and Adrienne Rich’s notion of “compulsory heterosexuality,” in 2002 Robert McRuer identified a “compulsory abled-bodiedness,” where “being able-bodied means being capable of the normal physical exertions required in a particular system of labor” (McRuer 91). He shows how both ableism, discrimination or prejudiced against disabled people in favour of abled-bodied people and heteronormativity support each other, pressuring people to behave in socially acceptable ways. Similarly, a few years later, Tobin Siebers identified a powerful but largely invisible “ideology of ability” that permeates society, which he said is often a “baseline by which humanness is determined. The lesser the ability, the lesser the human being” (Siebers 10).

While one project of literary disability studies has revealed the formation and hegemony of normalcy, another has showed how both fiction and film, through disabled characters, disability metaphors, and even their underlying structure, use disability to address countless aspects of human thought and experience. They demonstrated that disability, which might initially seem marginal, is actually pervasive and does significant cultural work. First, just as second wave feminist scholars explored representations of women in male authored texts, or critical race and postcolonial specialists considered depictions of African Americans or colonized people in books written by American or European white writers, so critics in literary disability studies investigated disabled characters in canonical works by mostly non-disabled authors. From Shakespeare's *Richard III* to the blind inhabitants of Wells's "The Country of the Blind", from the cognitively disabled Benjy Compson in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* to McCullers's John Singer in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, from Achebe's Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* to Sinha's physically deformed narrator in *Animal's People*, disability shows up in every period and literary tradition. Rather than trying to diagnose characters with disabilities, scholars in literary disability studies investigate the almost bewildering number of functions that the representations of disability perform. In addition, they sometimes investigated how depictions relate to their historical moment, showing how authors create, perpetuate, or contest the attitudes of their time. Meanings of disability are not constant, but vary from work to work, just as in reality they vary with bodily condition, time, and place. Probing representations of such characters has become a staple of literary disability studies, revealing hidden patterns and expanding the way canonical narratives are read.

In addition to disabled characters, scholars have called attention to the frequent metaphorical use of disability, which adds to the meanings of disability in texts. Early literary disability studies critics sometimes expressed misgivings about figurative uses of disability, pointing out how such tropes frequently are quick ways vividly to depict something bad, broken, or wrong, even if that thing is unrelated to disability itself. Reading with the material lives of disabled people in mind, scholars like Davis and Mitchell and Synder noted how such discourse increases the negative cultural meanings and the stigma of having a disability. More recently, however, some critics have revised this view of disability metaphor. For example, in 2005 Michael Bérubé acknowledged the value of objecting to representations that simply invoke pity or horror, but wrote that rejecting disability tropes because they are not realistic seems "incompatible with the enterprise of professional literary study" (Bérubé 570). Instead, he argued for an approach that raises awareness of how many familiar metaphors and narrative devices are "grounded in the under recognized facts of bodily difference" (Bérubé 570). Along the same lines, Amy Vidali argued against simply policing harmful metaphors, urging artists and scholars instead to find ways to work "critically, ethically, transgressively, and creatively at the edges of disability metaphor" (Vidali 51). Scholars in the field seemed to move to become more open to rich varieties of disability metaphor in narratives.

A third element of disability in literature is structural. Scholars have pointed out how disability can shape the very form of narratives. Lennard J. Davis and Mitchell and Synder argued that authors sometimes organise narratives around normalcy. In addition, Davis equated the very act of reading, which is typically silent and visual, with deafness, arguing that writing and decoding texts is bound up in disability. Notably, some disability studies scholars have claimed certain canonical writers as disabled, even if the authors themselves did not view themselves in such terms during their lifetimes. Candidates here include Milton, who became blind, Alexander Pope, who had short stature and a spinal condition, Lord Bryon, who was born with a deformed foot, Flannery O'Connor, who as adult contracted lupus and walked on crutches, Borges, who lost much of his sight, and many more. In 2002, Sharon Synder called attention to how such authors are typically seen as succeeding despite impairments. On the contrary, she argued that often disability is an integral part of their accomplishment: "Disability experiences led [them] to literary achievement, not as mere compensation for physical differences but as necessary resignification of their bodies in the social register of art" (Synder 178).

Alice Hall and other pointed out that since 1990 there have been an outpouring of life writing by disabled authors. Perhaps because of new interest in disability, improved access, and/or easier paths to publication, a number of autobiographical works have appeared by writers across the disability spectrum. Such work has given a direct written voice to disabled authors, who often testify to their journey from isolation to membership in a larger community. As in other identity based fields, life writing has an important place in disability studies because it gives individual real world perspectives from within the community.

As the field of literary disability studies quickly matured, it flourished alongside feminist, gender, race and sexuality studies. As an interdisciplinary identity-based field with a strong foundation in social justice and political engagement, disability studies has many shared values, concerns, and methodologies with these areas of inquiry. Because every individual has many overlapping identities, none of these areas of identity-based scholarship can or should be independent of the others or mutually exclusive. For this reason, in addition to their interconnected histories and missions, identity-based fields of scholarship need to attend to intersectionality—that snarl of gender, disability, race, class, and other identities that Clare describes. So, although Gender/Sexuality/Queer/Feminist studies has often overlooked Disability studies as a part of its discourses, and Disability studies has often overlooked gender and sexuality, the fields can and should be brought into conversation for the benefit of both disciplines.

Intersectional works in Gender and Disability studies recognizes the ways in which gender and disability, and with them, race pervade every level of society and culture, from institutions and the law to social identities and what Garland-Thomson calls “the shared human experience of embodiment” (Garland-Thomson 4). This is not only necessary because there are many women, feminists, queers, and genderqueers who are disabled, but also because the disciplines together demonstrates how we all constructed subjects, produced—and often policed—through the rules of social and cultural embodiment. Disability studies and Gender studies are, together, attuned to the realities and fictions of bodily difference, to the impact of environment on accessibility, and to the ways that privilege produces otherness and exclusion.

The overlap between gender/sexuality/queer/feminist studies is not only a product of political and personal alliance or of shared disciplinary methodology. Individuals who are queer or genderqueer and individuals who are disabled and individuals who are queer/genderqueer and disabled, have in common several factors distinct from many other identity groups. American theorist Robert McRuer summarizes some key specific overlaps between the two fields:

> Socialisation for queers and for people with disabilities often occurs in heterosexual and able-bodied families isolated from queer community or disability community; the rhetoric of coming out that now permeates the disability movement has clear antecedents in the gay liberation movement and at its best does not signify discovery of some deep essential truth but rather coming out to a vibrant movement intent of collectively and often quite literally rebuilding the world around us; some of the identities shaped in both fields come with some of the same limitations, especially when those identities are used to understand non-Western locations (that is, the extent to which models of disability identity are adequate for describing other times and places is currently an open question); and both communities have faced medicalization or pathologization and face similar new dangers, normalization perhaps at the forefront. (McRuer 181)

Disability Studies explores the idea that our bodies do not have an essential biological truth linked to any particular physical trait, but rather that our identities, including those of gender, sex, and ability, are constructed by our cultures and environments as much as or more than by our biology. An antiessentialist approach to disability sees individual as subjects within larger ideological systems—in this case, the disability/ability system—which produce categories of identity that otherwise are not inherent to the bodies of those subjects to classify, regulate, or control them. In other words, although there are certain biological or bodily traits that are often aligned with a certain type of disability, an antiessentialist approach would say that those traits in isolation cannot determine disability. Identity categories are understood and interpreted in the world. Although important, the body has no essential (dis)ability until it is identified and categorized through its culture's discourses of identity.

An antiessentialist understanding of disability is aligned with the social model of disability because it makes visible the ways in which the social construction of identity categories can be a tool of oppression. If we understand bodies to be essentially disabled, then we legitimize unequal treatment of those bodies; if we instead understand bodies as part of a system that produces and policies disability, race, gender, and other categories, then we see how the system might be rigged against the very bodies that it categorizes. If we use essentialist categories to make classes of people, we can then legitimize their unequal treatment rather than address the structural inequalities built into those identity categories. By making a distinction between the body and its identification, an antiessentialist approach to disability avoids false binaries, making room for an in-between space between male and female, queer and straight, able-bodied and disabled.

There are scholars and activists in disability studies who resist antiessentialist approaches because they run the risk of abstracting the lived realities of the body. They argue that although essentialized identity categories—women, people with disabilities, queers—may oversimplify the ways in which identity is produced in society, they can nevertheless be productive in creating communities and cultures and identifying discrimination. One way of bridging the gap between the essentialist and antiessentialist camps is to understand identity as constructed while acknowledging that our cultural understandings of identity continues to create fixed categories; in this kind of strategic essentialism, even as we show that sex and disability are social constructs, we can see how feminism and disability rights are necessary for people identified as female or disabled by that construct and how self-identification with identity-based community and affinity might be generative and liberatory.

First articulated in the context of gender by Judith Butler, the theory of performativity is the idea that, in the absence of essentialized bodily traits, identity categories are performed or created by an individual who consistently learns to play by the rules of (pre-)existing gender scripts to produce herself or himself as a recognizable "subject" before the law; that is, as someone who can claim rights of being. In the context of gender performativity, Butler argues that gender is determined not by biological sex, but instead by the ways in which an individual performs the rules of his or her assigned gender, thus producing either a normative or non-normative presentation. According to Butler, queer and non-normative gender performance and presentation causes "gender trouble" by revealing that all genders, including normative ones, are actually something that needs to be performed in order to become real and to be perceived as such. Performativity draws attention to the social construction of identity by revealing the ways that internalized social codes produce identity from the outside in, not from the inside out. Garland-Thomson, McRuer, Samuels, Alison Kafer, and other disability theorists have compellingly applied Butler's model of gender performativity to disability, arguing that able-bodiedness and disability are, like gender, produced and displayed as performances in response to cultural rules. Whether a subject is perceived as disabled depends on his or her culture, including the built environment that creates dominant spaces and access in that culture and on his or her conscious and unconscious performance in that culture. Gender trouble might then be supplemented by what McRuer calls "ability trouble" (McRuer, 34), in which the non-normative performance of disability draws attention to the inherent instability of all bodies, especially the able-body.

For performativity to work, it has to be understood as a mechanism for naturalizing ability—when a person performs normative gender, sexuality, or abled-bodiedness, we do not see it as a performance because it seems like an unconscious act that is considered natural because of essentialist ideas about the body coupled with the controlling forces of compulsory heterosexuality, compulsory gender norms, and compulsory abled-bodiedness/mindedness. However, when performativity is interrupted by trouble, its artificiality and constructed nature can be made visible. For example, it may seem natural for a cisgender woman to wear her hair long, to wear lipstick, and to dress in feminine clothes because her apparent sex and gender are aligned in a normalized way. In contrast, a butch woman's genderqueer presentation might seem unnatural because butch masculinity can be seen as misaligned with sex and gender norms. However, when we see the masculine and feminine presentation side by side, we understand that neither is inherently natural or right; both are produced by their subjects in response to cultural meanings associated with the trappings of hair or clothing, and both are distinct from any particular trait of the body beneath the clothes. So too with disability: we are conditioned to think of able bodies and their abilities as the norm until we are troubled by the existence of equally valid and real disabled bodies.

By understanding that gender and ability are both linked to, but are not determined by, the body, we become aware of the instability of the body and the impermanence of any one presentation. Therefore "normal" is unnaturalized once it is exposed as a cultural production rather than a fixed reality. Thu, the embodied self need not be limited by compulsory presentation and can instead perform denaturalized, unidealized genders and abilities. Antiessentialism and performativity help explain that there is no true or natural normal against which we can measure gender or ability. As historian Bonnie G. Smith and gender studies scholar Beth Hutchison puts it: "Disability studies takes a position against 'normate' ideas of bodies and gender, encouraging us to think outside and in-between categories" (Beth Hutchison 3). The term 'normate' coined by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson in *Extraordinary Bodies*, refers to the identity position of a person without disabilities against which disability is measured. However, as the phrase "temporarily able-bodied" illustrates, normate existence is an illusion and norms are themselves historically and culturally specific and ever-shifting. By extension, disability is defined in opposition to an artificial and arbitrary standard of normalcy that only seems to be objective and universal because we are so much a part of its production. For this reason, disability studies specialist Lennard Davis suggests that "disability studies" be renamed "normal studies" because the study of disability is, in fact, an examination of the constructed normalcies that produce disability.

Approaching normalcy as a historically specific cultural construction mirrors moves in queer and trans-gender theory that similarly show that normative gender is a historically and culturally produced phenomenon rather than a natural or innate one. An awareness of normalcy produced phenomenon rather than a natural or innate one. An awareness of normalcy helps differentiate between sex and gender, showing that no one gender presentation is “natural” to a particular sex. Recognizing normalcy as culturally constructed helps differentiate between impairment and disability, showing that no one impairment is “naturally” a disability outside of its cultural context. Disability studies scholar Alison Kafer summarizes the reasons that denaturalizing normalcy allows for crucial intersectional work in gender/sexuality and disability studies:

> What is needed, then, are crucial attempts to trace the ways in which compulsory able-bodiness/able-mindedness and compulsory heterosexuality interwine in the service of normativity; to examine how terms such as “defective,” “deviant,” and “sick” have been used to justify discrimination against people whose bodies, minds, desires, and practices differ from the unmarked norm; to speculate how norms of gendered behaviour—proper masculinity and femininity—are based in nondisabled bodies; and to map potential points of connection among, and departure between, queer (and) disability activists. (Kafer 17)

The critical work of revealing and dismantling compulsory able-bodiness compulsory able-mindedness, compulsory heterosexuality, and compulsory cisgender is sometimes called queering or cripping normalcy. It is enabled by antiessentialism, an understanding of performativity, and an openness to redefining the meaning and value of “normal” bodies and minds.

Disability affects the way in which a person’s gender or sexuality is understood in the world; stereotypes about gender and sexuality compound disability oppression, and they show how compulsory heterosexuality and gender norms support and perpetuate compulsory able-bodiedness and the myth of normalcy. There is a common and inaccurate assumption that people with disabilities have no sexual attractions or that people with disabilities are not sexually desirable. Women with disabilities face “banishment from femininity” and sexuality (Rosemarie Garland-Thomson 18). Being both female and disabled has been called the “double-handicap of gender and disability” because of the social burden of ableism and sexism together. Meanwhile, men with disabilities can face challenges in meeting social expectations of masculinity (Shuttleworth 167). At the same time, “cognitively disabled people are often stereotyped as hypersexual” (Hall 4). The mainstream lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movements rarely consider that people with disabilities are part of the queer community, as is evident at inaccessible queer events. Social restrictions against sexuality for people with disabilities are starkly evident when parents of children with developmental disabilities seek to medically delay puberty so that the children are never sexually mature. In one (in)famous example, parents promoted what they called the “Ashley treatment,” which they used to prevent their disabled daughter from gaining weight, growing breasts, or menstruating (Alice Hall and Kafer 45). Queering or crippling restrictive stereotypes about disability and sexuality not only benefits people with disabilities but also all people who are harmed by narrow definitions of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality.

To contemplate disability is to consider a political phenomenon framed by precarity, crisis and uncertainty. Of course, political upheaval, peripheral community participation and economic uncertainty have been an ever present experience for the most marginalized members of society. To contemplate disability is to scrutinise inequality. Disabled people’s organisations posit a simple but powerful idea: disability is a phenomenon associated with the discrimination of people with sensory, physical and cognitive impairments. Disability is not a flaw, an individual tragedy nor a whispered recognition of another’s embodied failing or a shameful family truth. Disability is a matter of public discourse and international disgrace, exemplified in the continued exclusion of impaired children from mainstream schools, the segregation of disabled adults from employment contexts and the denial of access to the basic human rights as a consequence of reducing welfare and essential services. The politics of disability continues to reveal the very condition of inequity that blight the human condition. This is not to say that disability embodies human failing. Rather, it is to acknowledge the precarious positions occupied by disabled people in societies blighted by disablism: the exclusion of people with sensory, physical and cognitive impairments. But, of course, disability is so much more than this. Disability politics, arts, scholarship and culture offer new ways of conceiving and living life, existing with one another and recreating communities that include, augment and emphasise the qualities we all hold as human beings. Disability is both a signifier of inequity and the promise of something new and affirmative. It is these inbuilt contradictory qualities that give rise to the study of disability, which forms the subject and object of disability research and scholarship.

For three decades the field of disability studies has produced a body of theoretical work that is, broadly speaking counter-hegemonic to dominant understandings of disability. Hegemonic framings of disability individualise, pathologies, medicalise, psychologise, essentialise and depoliticise the phenomenon of disability. In contrast, disability studies theory has re-sited disability as an object through which to understand the workings of capitalist society, a political category around which to mobilise, a rich phenomenon produced through social and cultural practices, an identity around which to politically organise, a cultural script marked by process of normalisation and an ontological experience ever shaped by a host of external factors.

Over the last few decades, the field of disability studies has seen a tremendous rise. This interdisciplinary field has built upon the early work of disability studies and produced a body of contemporary knowledge that boasts sophistication and nuance. This is not to say that disability studies theory before the critical turn was basic or simplistic. Theory has always been dense. Goodley says that it is a “location populated by people who advocate building upon the foundational perspectives of disabilities studies whilst integrating new and transformative agendas associated with postcolonial, queer and feminist theories” (Dan Goodley 190-191). This merging of epistemological perspectives and ontological desires has created a rich tapestry of concepts and frameworks.

One of the early leitmotifs of emerging disability studies scholarship was an attitude of tolerance to divergent viewpoints and clashing perspectives. As disability studies grows in maturity and distinct communities of practice and theoretical persuasions are adopted, we need to remain mindful not to produce schisms, orthodoxies and prejudice. We should pose questions about the purpose and inclusivity of disability theory. We remain attentive to considerations of disability, matter and discourses as more intersectional analyses are preferred. We should encourage the interplay of disability and ability to contemplate the meaning of disability.

Theoretical debates will always prompt debate and discord. Those that deliberate, ponder or research disability do so not from an objective or disengaged positionality. Many come to disability studies because of wider personal and political entanglements with matters of social justice. The arrival of disability studies is testimony to the maturity of a field that has built upon foundational knowledge and recognises that complex socio-political times require an opposite response. The politics of disability are interwined with many other politics including those associated with racism, sexism, transphobia, occidentalism, colonialism, classism, developmentalism and heterosexism. Disability studies should seek to be in tune with these complexities but this does not mean this community will always get things right. Since the beginnings of social, cultural and economic models of disability in the early 1990s, the political landscape has changed in many ways. Disability theoreticians and activists have drawn attention to the missing parts of disability knowledge. This has included to name a few, calls to engage with the politics of incarceration, indigenous and First Nations people, trans-activism, trans-globalisation, rurality, animal rights, and trans humanism. There is still much to do. It is therefore imperative to roll back from our knowledge production to probe further the assumptions on which we draw and the possible consequences of what we propose.

CHAPTER- III

PROJECTION OF DISABILITY IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S *ICE-CANDY-MAN*

> In nature there is no blemish but the mind;
>
> None can be deformed but the unkind.
>
> (Shakespeare Act-III, Scene-IV)

Disability is a socially constructed term that mirrors an error in the thinking process of the society. The person with polio does not have a problem; the problem is fairly with the building which prevents the wheel-chair from getting inside or with the cab that is not manufactured to accommodate the wheel-chair. The society believes a person to be disabled since the person in question because requires a wheel chair and a ramp to move around or a portable hearing aid to hear etc. Disability thus lies in the mind and not in the body. It is not an inability. The incapacity to hear or speak or walk or see cannot be an impediment on the way to education and empowerment. But realism is served on a platter of harshness.

People with disabilities are a significant part of the society; but they, in fact, continue to be marginalized, discriminated, abused and undergo excessive hardships. Systematic abuse and atrocities against people with disabilities continue to be rampant in the society at large. Disability is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional experience for the person involved. There may be effects on the organs or body parts and there may be effects on a person's participation in the day-to-day life.

There is evidentiary interchange between disability and social attitude; family being the foremost. Family is the fundamental unit of a society. Hence, the role of the family becomes poignant. The family which has a disabled member experiences prejudice on a regular basis, in all the public places and occasions. The entire family becomes crippled and ostracized. Society holds fast to the presumption—a disabled child means a disabled family.

Literature is the reflection of society and thus it reflects the spirit of the age. The fiction as it is believed is conceived out of the society in which it lives and flourishes. Subsequently, it is supposed to be the reflection of the living style of the society. It adapts the customs, traditions and culture of the society and it does not ignore the changes in the society, be it synchronic or diachronic, rather depicts them in a befitting manner. It is often believed that a fiction writer portrays an ideal world which educates, delights, and improves upon the existing set of circumstances. Each writer attempts to construct the world which is beautiful and attractive and in many cases imaginative. There are many writers who through their fiction try to give social message to the society. In other words some writers try to voice against the age-old customs and traditions of the society. In this depiction, women writers assumes a significant role. It is also believed that in the portrayal of society, the representation of women emerges as the most significant aspect of the writers of English fiction as part of feminism.

In the course of the last decade feminist researchers have begun to demonstrate the value of experiential wisdom with written accounts of their personal journeys with disability and oppression. However, it is important to note that in addition to feminist researchers portraying personal experiences about disability, this research appears to have enhanced awareness about gender and the further relationship to patriarchy and power. One such model is taken from Carol Grbich, who outlines that feminist conducting research ought to acknowledge the presence of gender-specific power relations favouring men at the expense of women, so that any textual search ought to reinforce the discourse of gender inequality. Like Grbich's insights into feminist theory, she implies language is a tool which seeks to emancipate diverse ways of knowing. Thus, for women who confront multiple oppressions in everyday life, textual representations of women with disabilities could become more meaningful if language was acknowledged as symbolic and interactive; objectifying individual personal identities and roles while still recognizing gender inequality.

A feminist disability approach fosters more complex understandings of the cultural history of the body. By considering the ability/disability system, feminist disability theory goes beyond explicit disability topics such as illness, health, beauty, genetics, eugenics, aging, reproductive technologies, prosthetics, and access issues. Feminist disability theory addresses such broad feminist concerns as the unity of the category 'woman' the status of the lived body, the politics of appearance, the medicalization of the body, the privilege of normalcy, multiculturalism, sexuality, the social construction of identity, and the commitment to integration. To borrow Toni Morrison's notion that blackness is an idea that permeates American culture, disability too is a pervasive, often unarticulated, ideology informing our cultural notions of self and other. Disability—like gender—

is a concept that pervades all aspects of culture; its structuring institutions, social identities, cultural practices, political positions, historical communities, and the shared human experience of embodiment.

Bapsi Sidhwa occupies a central position in Pakistani English fiction writing. Her novels are written with a genuine social purpose. The central consciousness of her rests on the steady growth of women's essential feminine identity and the journey of selfhood. Feminism plays an imperative function in *Ice-Candy-Man*. It is through this aspect of the novel that it caricatures the importance of feminism and the unique position of women in the world. Feminism incorporates the social and political aspects that makes a body oppressed while allowing empowerment to be present in acknowledging its culture. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson clarifies that these related systems of oppression pervades all aspects of culture by its structuring institutions, social identities, cultural practices, political positions, historical communities, and the common human experience of embodiment. Garland-Thomson further describes that identity based critical enterprises have enriched and complicated our understandings of social justice, subject formation, subjugated knowledge and collective actions.

In the novel, Bapsi Sidhwa portrayed her female characters as more distinctive, strong and active as the one who are aware of her surroundings. Unlike other female characters that surrender hope in critical circumstances, the female characters of Sidhwa remains about and fight against their fates and denies other's authority on them. This struggle makes them inimitable and exclusive from others. Sidhwa talks about oppressive structures of customs, traditions and religion that victimize women. All the protagonists in Sidhwa's stories battle with the system not only to create space exclusively for themselves but also develop in themselves the ability to carry on with life according to their own preferences. Sidhwa is a new and important voice in the realm of women writers. Her novels are written with genuine social purpose. The position of women in various levels is outlined skilfully in all her novels.

Published in 1988 *Ice-Candy-Man*, presents the real picture of the subcontinent during 1947 and the eventual outcomes of partition. In the novel, she attempts to portray the life with her artistic impartiality during the period of partition of India. Bapsi Sidhwa through her female protagonist Lenny Sethi, disabled four years girl endeavours to change the impression of disability in society describing the adventurous four years journey of the protagonist, showing her concern on pitiable conditions of women in the days of the partition as well as socio-political issues too. If we look at the portrayal of disabled characters in the works of Indian English writers, it for the most part mirrors a negative portrayal of characters with zero contribution in making society integrated. But in *Ice-Candy-Man*, the novelist projects the observation and speculation of a disabled girl who belongs to Parsi community etc. Above all she keeps the religion of humanism on top. Lenny is a Parsi, but lives with her Ayah Shanta, Hindu Girls and Imamdin, and her Muslim cook happily. Sidhwa shows that there was communal harmony before the Partition days but communal riots made the people change. Now love and trust disappeared leaving the place to hatred, jealousy and vengeance which gave birth to a new society replete with atrocities on the women, abductions, mutilations and rapes on innocent women and girls which brought disaster in the lives of Indians. Even in such horrible circumstance Lenny Sethi is seen seeking the way to escape out of Hira Mandi of Pakistan. While Lenny Sethi herself is confined to place and depend on other for her needs, she still thinks about people and successfully attempts to save the life of Shanta with the help of her Godmother. Her neutral outlook and vision towards life make us realize disability is not to be segregated from society but ought to be assimilated to.

Ice-Candy-Man narrates the events that erupted out of the India-Pakistan partition. Sidhwa employs a young child narrator Lenny, who seem to be Sidhwa in real life. Lenny, as a polio-prone child is the chief voice in the novel through whom the entire narration is made. Other than Lenny, Sidhwa presents a galaxy of women characters in the novel—Rodabai the Godmother, Shanta alias Ayah, Lenny's mother and Slavesister. Each of these women characters is a symbol of each virtue and when taken together they are the symbols of strength, liberation and force to reckon partriarchy. They voice their dissent against the patriarchial society, offering importance to women's liberty and individual freedom. These women characters evoke a sense of solidarity among them in fighting against the traditionalist patriarchs. They act as agents to expose the biases which prevail in the patriarchial society. The women characters are very sure and conscious of their individuality and they cannot be easily dominated. The experiences which are presented here by the women are very fresh and new. The novel encompasses various female characters of varied temperaments. The reactions and responses of the female characters of *Ice-Candy-Man* are resonant with audacity and determination.

Sidhwa brings together female figures from all ranges of age and size, from young Lenny to Godmother. The novelist exposes how female characters, young and old, are positioned within the gender specific roles through patriarchial biases centred on the female body. Sidhwa allows us in fiction to see how the female body remains the most important entity for the female figure in its ability and disability as it assigns meaning in the gendered world of *Ice-Candy-Man*. We also notices how the female figures unite in sympathy and understanding to help and rescue each other as the mayhem of partition begins to violate the female bodies.

The very distinguishing feature of the novel *Ice-Candy-Man* is the chronicler Lenny. She witnesses the bloody and gory partition and act as the projector in the novel. Being polio-stricken, she recognizes the circumstances and distinguishes her liberty and in no point she feels for her lameness, but on the contrary she fights to get triumph over her in activeness, she feels herself as normal as others and though she enjoys some special benefits, she is aware of her world. Lenny can be compared to the persona that Chaucer adopts in his epilogue to *The Canterbury Tales*, rendering credibility by being almost a part of the reader's consciousness. With the wonder of a child she observes the social changes and human behaviour, her persona has a source of sharp irony.

The novel begins on a note of restriction and reduction. Lenny says that her world is compressed and her child's mind is blocked by the gloom emanating from the wire-mesh screening the oblong ventilation slits. She feels such sadness for the dumb creature she imagines lurking behind the wall. She knows that it is dumb because she has listened to its silence, with her ear to the wall. This capacity to listen to silence, to create text from negation, is the special gift of women writers who are denied articulation in a man's world. It is also significant that this silence is experienced in relation to the Salvation Army wall—the Salvation Army bringing the civilizing message of the colonizing power. Sidhwa's opening pages lays stress on the women-related issues witnessed during that time.

Sidhwa has given a feminist touch to the character of Lenny who moves forward in life despite various hindrances and obstacles. As she observes life of various women around her, she understands the limitation associated with women's life in patriarchial society. She is flabbergasted to see men betraying and sexually assaulting women and exploiting them. Though she enjoys her situation sometimes in the novel, "Having polio infancy is like being born under a lucky star. It has many advantages. It permits me to access my mother's bed in the middle of the night" (Bapsi Sidhwa 10). She enjoys life as it is. Unlike other children she is more interested in knowing the things that happen in her surrounding. She is a keen observer and a quick learner. This quality makes her unique from others. About her learning and observing power she remarks: "I learn fast, I learn of human needs, fragilities, cruelties and joys" (Sidhwa 20).

Sidhwa through the eyes of Lenny, delineates the struggles and sufferings of women: domestic violence, domestic discrimination, rape, kidnapping etc. Ayah becomes a victim of kidnapping and abuse. She is seen as a "fallen woman" and not in a position to be accepted by her family and friends. She loses her home and her loved ones, and most importantly she loses her individuality. Lenny's mother Mrs. Sethi, is also marginalized because of her gender. Neither is she taken seriously nor is her attempt to help the victims given any serious thought. However, by the end of the novel, she is described as one of those brave people who travel across the riot strewn areas trying to help and rehabilitate the victims. The novel uses the historical event of partition to express some of the most pertinent social issues; *Ice-Candy-Man* can also be read as a memoir of human suffering in a society divided not only because of one's religious affiliation but also gender.

Lenny is treated as disabled not only because of her lameness, but her gender likewise adds to her disablement. In the novel, the womenfolk are marginalized and regarded as 'disabled' because of their gender. Sidhwa, in her novel highlights the issues of women in a male dominated patriarchial society. Her depiction of the female characters marks her prominence in the literary world. Her female characters possess a peculiar moral centre and demand for their own earned, distinguished identity and recognition. Sidhwa asserts that women's oppression and victimization begins with their silence to it. They silently tolerate the exasperation of patriarchy and serve the callous men related to it. Sidhwa certifies that the root cause of women's victimization is their silence to oppression; they have internalize self-destructive values of societal order. The silence of women prevails not only in domestic life but in social and matrimonial life as well. Women remain voiceless throughout their life. From their young age, they are taught to keep quiet in front of men, consequently, they internalize this quietness as a part of their life and considers it as their fate. Such as the "fallen woman" in the novel remains silent because she accepts her dishonour as the decree of her fate. The fallen woman do not resist or challenge the norms imposed by the men, they silently endure the atrocities of patriarchy as a divine law from above. They remain silent incase they should fall short of societal standards.

Sidhwa attest that women have to abort the cruelties and stand by herself. Believing in women's emancipation, she contests that emancipation will not be granted to women, but they have to fight for it. Firthermore, it will not be possible, until women realize their worth in the society and raise their voices against their oppressors. She denies the traditional and patriarchial definition of women through the portrayal of her female characters, who liberates themselves free from the chains of conventions, by countering and remaining contrary to the rule of patriarchy.

Lenny, the central protagonist in the novel, moves past the traditional roles of women, having critical observation and perceiving power towards women's exploitation in the patriarchial system. She moves from the conventional female roles. She acts as a feminine agent in the novel by perceiving a womanly aspect of understanding of social establishments. From her childhood, she perceives an unequal conduct of men towards the women. When Lenny's father asked the doctor whether it would be fine to send Lenny to school, the doctor replies that she is doing fine without school. They should not pressure her to go to school or else her nerves could be affected. The doctor further adds saying that she is not going to become a professor so why bother to send her to school. Moreover the doctor says that Lenny has to marry, have children, and lead a carefree, happy life. And so they should not strain her with studies and exams. At this point, Lenny instinctively understands that her freedom has been suppressed and that the suggestion made by Col. Bharucha has sealed her fate. Lenny's doctor limits Lenny within the gender role ascribed for women by the society. He does not feel that missing school education is a matter of great concern for a girl. In other words, her intellectual development is effortlessly dismissed in the face of her biological obligations. Sidhwa uncovers the rigid attitudes held against women's intellectual development and the little consideration paid to such matters. She reveals the constraints associated with a girl's life. Since ages it has been considered a woman's duty to tend house, raise children and offer solace to her family. Simone de Beauvior holds the same view about social conditioning. She writes in *The Second Sex* that the girl child is often concerned in this way with motherly tasks. She is compelled to acquire feminine traits that make her mindful of her feminine obligations. However in this manner she is deprived of happy freedom, the carefree aspect of childhood. But in Lenny's case she never allowed anyone to steal her freedom. Sidhwa presents Lenny as a recovering woman who opposes oppression and questions every unfair dispositions and attitude. Lenny exhibits an increasing agency by deliberately distinguishing herself from the social norms. As she finds out the constructed systems which delineate her freedom, she makes a cautious decision between conforming with or deviating from those systems. For instance, she openly acknowledges her manipulative power of limp and does not feel shame in her physical problem of limping.

As a girl Lenny learns that marriage of girls is of outmost importance to their parents. Independence and self-identity are intended for men. The intense concern for her marriage even in her childhood places Lenny with apprehension. She was told that drinking tea makes one darker, and that she was dark enough. Everyone says, "It's a pity Adi's fair and Lenny so dark. He's a boy. Anyone will marry him" (Sidhwa 81).

Lenny does not seem to comply with gendered social norms. This is displayed through her interactions with her male cousin. Lenny and her cousin at times share a minor relationship; they kiss, pursue each other's affections, and promise to marry. Yet, in their exchanges Lenny does not demonstrates feminine behaviours of submission. Rather she maintains a level of control. Lenny, in contrast her mother, does not feel obligated to her cousin's inclinations. Instead, she is direct in expressing her honest opinions and occasional disgust with his actions. When he tries to coax her into new sexual behaviours, she states: "I like Cousin. I've even thought of marrying him when we grow up, but this is a side of him I'm becoming aware of for the first time, and I don't like it" (Sidhwa 172). Subsequently, rather than submitting to masculine authority, Lenny shows command over Cousin: "Bent on further pleasuring me, squashing his panting chest on my flattened bosom, Cousin gives me a soggy kiss. Poor Cousin. His sense of timing is all wrong [...] Pushing him back and holding him at arm's length, I say, 'If you don't tell me everything at once, I'll knee your balls'" (Sidhwa 243). In this interaction Lenny acts against the expected gender roles. While the male is expected to dominate, Lenny does not allow him the chance to do so. She does not conform to what is expected from the Cousin and makes it very clear that she is not intrigued by him.

In contrast to the patriarchial demand for women to be silent, Lenny inquires about different attitudes of men. Once when she was queering about different things, her mother stops her from asking questions by saying that when little girls pose too many questions their tongues drop off. Ayah additionally instructs Lenny to stop asking too many questions, and that men do not like it when we inquire on all matters. Still Lenny continues questioning and challenges the establish meanings and attitudes of the people in the society. She, by no means internalizes the traditionally imposed social practices and nuances. She has a strong personality and never lets anybody to assume responsibility for her life.

Lenny recognises the biological exploitation of women during partition time. She is stunned to see Ice-Candy-Man pushing his wife Ayah into the business of prostitution. Seeing Hindu-Muslim women being raped during the riots petrifies her. She watches men turning into monsters that do not care for morality and human values. Women became victims of personal and political envy, malignance, jealousy and rage. These were the tools for men through which they could practice power over women. Lenny does not acknowledge the prevailing social conditions. As a grown up, she analyses the whole situation and intends to take a stand for women. She decides to save Ayah from the terrible profession of prostitution and converses with her mother regarding the matter. Lenny decides: "If those grown men pay to do what my comparatively small cousin tried to do, then Ayah is in trouble. I think of Ayah twisting Ice-Candy-Man's intrusive toes and keeping the butcher and wrestler at arm's length. And of those stranger's hands hoisting her chocolate body into the cart [...] I decide it's time to confront Mother" (Sidhwa 247). It is because of Lenny's continuous effort that Ayah is saved and gets back to her home.

Throughout the novel, Lenny appears as a courageous and bold girl who refuses to conform to all social conditioning. Instead of limitations associated with women's lives in patriarchial society, Lenny exhibits a powerful narrative voice. She is not only aware of the social system but does not hesitate to questioning and selectively participating in it. Sidhwa, through the character of Lenny, underlines the decisive role of women and encourages women to recognize their position and stand against the autocracy of men. The novelist portrayal of Lenny, shows how the realization of their potential 'self' will enable them to challenge their oppressors.

While discussing female marginalization and victimization, the character of Ayah is holds tremendous message. The most admirable feature in her character is the discovery of her 'self' which she acquires at the end of the novel. At the novel's initial stage, she was the centre of the "male gaze". She attracted a lot of attention because of her chocolate brown skin and attractive body. Lenny notices:

> Stub-handed twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their pose and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, masked in piety, shove aside their pretenses to ogle her with lust. Hawkers, cart drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with

> the unconcern of the Hindu Goddess she worships. (Sidhwa 3)

For Lenny, Ayah is the epitome of belief and faith. When her cousin doubts on the Ayah's information about struggling of petrol Lenny says: "if Ayah says there is petrol in the car's dicky there is petrol in the car's dicky" (Sidhwa 172). Shanta is portrayed as the great queen that controls the entire male bee that hang over her around. She has thirteen admirers including Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Parsi. She is the counter of attraction. Everyone likes her a lot for her work and for the love she has for others. The character of Ayah is the best example of Bapsi Sidhwa's portrayal of a true feminist. The major part of the novel revolves around Ayah. She is an eighteen year old girl who works as a caretaker of Lenny in a Parsi family. Though she works in a well natured place she is not guarded with safety because she is treated as a sex object by all other admirers and she is aware of that. She uses her charm as a stratagem of social endurance but this is possible to aggression of partition as the violence destroys all her recognizable world. She is aware and confident of her individuality. She educates Lenny with intelligence and choice. Though she is flirtatious with others she is extremely obedient to Lenny and her family. She takes care of Lenny as a mother. Ayah is the combined image of both beauty and intelligence. She was loved by everyone irrespective of a religion but during the wake of partition she becomes a Hindu for all. She is also a very keen observer of the surrounding. During the riots of the partition she got through a lot of suffering. Her beloved Masseur was murdered and this loss cannot be equalized by anyone. For this Lenny says:

> It looks like a house pinning for its departed soul haunted like Ayah's eyes are by the memories of Masseur. She secretly cries. Often I catch her wiping tears. (Sidhwa 186)

With the help of some hooligans Ice-Candy-Man abducts her and she was sent to kotha, the place of prostitutes and dancing girls. Now the beloved Ayah becomes a Hindu for him. In spite of the conviction that she is seduced and kept in kotha for months after marriage also her self respect and dignity does not vanish. Her name is changed as Mumtaz. Even after her marriage she remains assertive and says to Godmother: “I want to go to my family, I will not live with him” (Sidhwa 261). This shows her courage and daring nature.

Ayah’s rape and disappearance from the scene and again her reappearance from the red light area show the complex situation women were placed into. After her rape Ayah does not return to Lenny but becomes part of that group which South Asian society believes is the fit place for degraded and disgraced women. During and after partition, many women who were not accepted by their families opted for red light areas. Clearly women’s identity, religion and purity is not given any weight here. Hence Ayah marries Ice-candy-man not at her own will but as a rape victim with the choice.

Ice-Candy-Man pleads to godmother: “Please persuade her [..] explain to her [...] I’ll keep her like a Queen, like a flower I’ll make her happy” (Bapsi Sidhwa 261). Ayah never changes her decision and she stands stubborn in that and said: “but I cannot forget what happened” (Sidhwa 262). Her rejection to defeat regardless of physical and emotional trauma, marrying the defacement and her determination to look into future conveys moral courage to her. Thus the character of Ayah is unique and different from all other women characters as they accept their fate when they undergo physical mutilation. She is the symbol of self-respect and dignity. Though she knows that the survival of Hindu is very difficult she never talks about conversion as other did for their survival. She values everyone on the basis of human nature and character but not on religious credibility.

Moving further into the novel we can see Godmother as the supreme example for feminist characters. She is the pulsating figure by whom Lenny is very much inspired and influenced. Her character shows her person, her sharp approach, endless love towards Lenny and her attachment and contribution in social activities show the power of a feminine. Her sense of humour is impeccable. Despite her old age, she is exceptionally dynamic in her activities and the people around her respect her. Her depth of understanding in carrying the situation is known when she persuades Ayah saying: “she was a fated daughter. It can’t be undone. But it can be forgiven. Worse things are forgiven. Life goes on and the business of living buries the past [..] To make way for fresh joy and new sorrow that is the way of life”

(Sidhwa 262). As indicated by Lenny, Godmother's personality sparkles with razor-sharp mind. Notwithstanding her old age, she has the power to shape, modify and order not only individuals but even the system. In fact, Lenny describes her bond with her grandmother as stronger and grounded than the bond of motherhood. More fulfilling than the ties between men and women. She is the example of a woman who can provide securities and assurance to other women. Lenny says, that when she looks into her grandmother's shrewd, ancient eyes, it assures her that everything is going to be all right. This do not only exhibits Lenny's relationship with Godmother but also proclaims her feminine strength. She retains power through influencing numerous aspects of society and eventually liberating Ayah and condemning Ice-Candy-Man.

Godmother's knowledge is not restricted inside the traditional feminine realm of the domestic life. It goes far beyond and she is aware of the events in her country. Lenny narrates that this knowledge has been developed over time. Throughout the years, Godmother has set up a network of espionage with a reach of which even she is not aware. She has access to many ears and no one knows how many. Because Godmother makes it her business to have a deep understanding of everyone. She has developed connections in various levels of society. In one statement Lenny details Godmother's abundance of knowledge and diverse expertise:

> Godmother possesses a reservoir of random knowledge, [including] knowledge of ancient lore and wisdom and herbal remedy. You cannot be near her without feeling her uncanny strength. People bring to her their joys and woes. Show her their sores and swollen joints. Distilling the right herbs, adroitly instilling the right word in the right ear, she secures wishes, smooths relationships, cures illness, battles wrongs, solaces grief and prevents mistakes. (Sidhwa 223)

The feminine power of Godmother lies not only in knowledge, but also in action. Lenny has extreme faith in Godmother's ability to affect or prevent change, stating that she can move mountains from the paths of those she befriends, and erect mountainous barriers where she deems it necessary. Godmother seeks admission to a boarding school for Ranna which Lenny refers to as a minor miracle, as difficult as transposing him to a prosperous continent, and as valuable, as far as he might be concerned.

The most important incident which makes us to view the authoritative power and efficiency of Godmother to carry out condition in smooth way is the conversation between Ice-Candy-Man and Godmother. The most glorious example of her fearlessness, authoritativeness is evident when Godmother saves Ayah from the grasp of Ice-Candy-Man after she has been kidnapped and is kept at a kotha. It is not an easy task to talk and win with Ice-Candy-Man but Godmother accomplishes that. Affected at last by Godmother's story, silent Ice-Candy-Man lowers his eyes. Having his voice stripped of voice, he says: "I am a slave, Baijee. I worship her. She can come to no harm with me", No harm? Godmother asks in a deceptively cool voice and rocking her back like a scorpion's tail, she closes in for the final blow:

> You permit her to be raped by butchers, drunk and say come to no harm? Ice-Candy-Man head bolts back as it's been stuck. You would have your own mother carried off, if it's suited you! You are shameless badmash! Faithless. (Sidhwa 248)

Godmother's agency is explicitly evident in her interaction with Ice-Candy-Man. She verbally attacks him for abusing Ayah. Godmother goes beyond her gender by challenging the manhood of Ice-Candy-Man, when she questions as to: " what kind of man would allow his wife to dance like a performing monkey before other man? You're not a man, you're a low-born, two-bit evil little mouse!" (Sidhwa 248). In her verbal attack of Ice-Candy-Man, Godmother questions not only his morality but also his manhood. She further brings out that he is neither an honourable husband nor a manly protector. She clarifies her resentment, stating: "You have permitted your wife to be disgraced! Destroyed her modesty! Lived off her womanhood!" (Sidhwa 260). She further denounces him as a dutiful son as well, declaring: "You could have your own mother carried off if it suited you! You are a shameless badmash! Nimakharam! Faithless. You're not a man, you're a low-born, two-bit evil little mouse...the son of pigs and pimps!" (Sidhwa 261). In particular, Godmother's denunciation is for each and every man who makes victim of women. She denounces Ice-Candy-Man and liberates Ayah from her physical and marital subjection to him. Godmother opposes the traditional idea of passiveness of women, she proves that a woman can change the circumstances of individuals and can save them from the miseries of life. Godmother has the most notable feminine influence in the narrative. Through her social power and verbal dominance, Godmother breaks Ice-Candy-Man's confidence. She reduces him to a deflated poet, a collapsed peddler who quietly moves away, disappearing across the Wagh border into India. In her verbal and physical dominance over Ice-Candy-Man, Godmother gurantees feminine power within herself than over him as Mary Woolstonecraft wishes in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* "I do not wish them [women] to have power over men; but over themselves" (Woolstonecraft 113).

Without Godmother, the novel would not have attained its height. She is the lone character in the novel that works beyond the domestic things and sexuality and emerges as the vivacious figure. The most important factor for which the character of Godmother is depicted is to explore the 'self-importance' and 'self-worth' of women. Through the character of Godmother, Sidhwa features the persuasive and determining attributess of a woman who traverses social boundaries and explicitly challenges patriarchial pre-fix social norms and attitudes and assumes a pivotal role in helping and rescuing the victim women. She single-handedly deals with man's malicious desires. Her unique power is evident as she exerts a powerful influence throughout the novel.

Lenny's mother is another fascinating female character in *Ice-Candy-Man*. As a submissive housewife she lives her life within the four walls of her home. Lenny's mother is a representative of those traditional women who have subordinates to never express their desire to establish themselves as better human beings. She is pictured as the merger of both tradition and modernity. At situation she acts as a typical traditional housewife, looks after her husband with much care and concern, at times she untightens his shoes and according to the mood of her husband she submits herself and relieves him. Her mother's nature is revealed at times when she takes Lenny to the doctor. She feels herself responsible for Lenny's polio and feels regretful: "she should sit with me in the Sun? Massage like this or that? Use almond oil? I am to blame, she says, I left her to Ayah" (Sidhwa 8). The true feminist in her heart awards out when she witnesses the bloodshed. She finds a way to safeguard the lives of victims, who suffered during the partition. She voluntarily helps out not only Ayah but also the unseen and unfamiliar scapegoats, who faced the strange situation and underwent the physical harassment without being a part of the revolution.

Mrs. Sethi represents Sidhwa's recovering woman, who steps out of the chains of domesticity and societal order. At the point when the novel opens, she is depicted as an enfeeble serving wife who seems to be capable of only humouring her husband and rearing children, however later in the novel, she moves past the traditional role of housewife and becomes a social activist. She undertakes the task of rescuing the Fallen Women and endeavours to reestablish the women to their relatives or to find some kind of employment or housing for those who due to defilement cannot go to their families. She assumes a sterling role of a humanitarian by smuggling 'gasoline' to her friends to cross the border securely. J. Kleist says that in rescuing the Fallen Women, "she moves from the traditional role of a housewife" (Jacquelynn M. Kleist 69-80). Lenny notices a considerable change in her mother, she is no longer contented to remain at home all day, rather she "develops a busy air of secrecy and preoccupation [...] shoots off in the Morris, after father drudges off on his bicycle and returns in the afternoon and scoots out again" (Sidhwa 182). This is indicative of the recovering changes in Mrs. Sethi. She acts as a revolutionary leader leading the revolution against inequality, discrimination and social abuse rampant in the society against women. By highlighting the independent action and influence of Lenny's mother, Sidhwa demonstrates that all women did not sit by, helpless or indifferent when their fellow females were ravaged. The complex character of Lenny's mother encompases: "the heroic role of women in leading the revolution against inequality, abuse, and social justice" (Sethi 133).

By portraying unconventional women like Lenny, Ayah, Godmother and Mrs. Sethi, Sidhwa presents the assertive sides of women, who denies the patriarchial domination of their male counterparts. The novelist by presenting the recovering and the struggling women manifests the importance of struggle in the lives of women to acquire freedom. She points out the tags and labels on women, and unveils women's oppression and the double standards of the society where women are marginalized in the name of different relations. She upholds the view that until the women voice out against their oppressors, they are subject to suppression.

In her female characters, Sidhwa has created a nuanced variety of feminine roles. She presents a clear progression of women, from Lenny and Ayah, who display selected instances of personal agency, to Lenny's mother and Godmother, who are able to act autonomously and exert the increasing amounts of influence on surrounding individuals and circumstances, changing the lives of others as well as shaping their own. A study of the characters in *Ice-Candy-Man* shows that women are strong enough and is capable of living life on their own. They are not suppressed. In a patriarchial set up males are superior and females are considered inferior. All the good qualities are associated with male and all the weaknesses with female. But in *Ice-Candy-Man* all the strong characters are presented by female characters. The main character of the narrative is a young polio-stricken handicapped girl. Through this handicapped child, it is presented that women can be creative even with disabilities. She takes pen and narrates the story of the partition. In general notion writing is the characteristic of males and women has to perform domestic tasks. By making Lenny the narrator, Sidhwa lends weight to the feminine perspective.

Simon de Beauvior holds the opinion that mothers are responsible to inculcate the sense of submission in women. Lenny learns that marriage of a girl is of utmost importance to their parents. Independence and self identity is for men. As a child she enjoys the love of her mother and the protection of her father, but the story of Ice-Candy-Man's love for Ayah destroys her concept of love. The meeting of Godmother and Ice-Candy-Man opens her eyes to the wisdom of truth and compassion. She witnesses women being raped and men turning to beasts. Women including Ayah became prey of men. Lenny was shocked to see the human mind corrupted so easily. Men were declaring superiority over each other by sexually assaulting women.

Though Sidhwa uses the medium of English in writing, which indubitably puts her in the elite circle of writers and readers, she has been able to give voice to the marginalized sections of human society, by rigorously questioning the histories and assumptions of contemporary Pakistani society and posing counter-voice to the dominant patriarchial narrative which has subdued women to a large extent. Nevertheless her austere attack on a number of prevalent beliefs is softened by her, candid and wry humour. She uses it as a tool to criticize without causing much offense in her novels. Sidhwa provides an alternative perspective to the predominant narrative by subverting the roles assigned to female characters, thus recreating women's sense of history and belonging. Her women protagonists refuse to accept the narrow and constricting roles assigned to them by society and conventional notions. Sidhwa more often than not, voices the pain and injustice endured by the victims in terms of modesty and honour, who are made to suffer in silence and whose protestations go unheeded as Gayatri Spivak rightly observes, "Between patriarchy and imperialism [...] the figure of the woman disappears [...] into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the third-world woman caught between tradition and modernization" (Spivak 23).

To close, Bapsi Sidhwa, in her novel depicts different levels of oppression that a woman undergoes in a patriarchial society. But she also very aptly presents the way in which "oppressed women" succeed in coming out of their societal gender norms and nuances. Initially, Mrs. Sethi and Ayah were sheltered up in their own bubble or cocoons, and did not care to talk back against their suppressors, but as the novel neared its end, they succeeded in emancipating themselves from the overwhelming shadow of their male counterparts. Unless the victims raise their voice against their oppressors, no one will voice out on their behalf. If they remain silent, they will be silenced forever. In the novel, Godmother also plays a very significant role in helping the women to gain their emancipation. The role of Lenny and Godmother gives the narrative an extra aid. Sometimes when we go astray, we need people to remind us and hold back in our own tracks and that is what Godmother does in the novel. She assumes the role of a 'matriarch' in a patriarchial society. Women who were tagged as 'disabled' because of their gender finally succeeds in breaking themselves free from their shells and builds their own identity free from the constructs and constrains of the society. Mrs. Sethi no longer confine herself with the domestic works which she as a wife, mother and a woman was expected to adhere to, but as the novel progressed towards its end, we see a sea changing change in her attitude. She is no longer like her former self, she changes for the better. Initially her views were not given any serious thought, and her voices were left unheard, but at the novel's end she is portrayed as one of those brave women who travel across the riot strewn areas to help and rehabilitate the victims. Sidhwa, in recounting the story of the Indian Subcontinent and its people fractured by the largest ethno-religious and political upheaval in recent history, reveals the fate of the women who are marginalized and demarcated because of their gender.

CHAPTER-IV

SURMOUNTING SOCIETAL CONSTRUCTS IN FIRDAUS KANGA'S *TRYING TO GROW*

> Being able-bodied means being capable of the physical exertions required in a particular system of labour.
>
> (McRuer 8)

The above epigraph is taken from Robert McRuer's initial section of 2006 text *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* in which he contends that there is a potent connection between discourses of sexual orientation and those of able-bodiedness, and proposes a perusing practice he calls "crippling" as a potential outgrowth of queer theory. McRuer draws on Judith Butler to recommend that, couple with compulsory heterosexuality, compulsory able-bodiedness requires a performance that can never fully be acomplished, as all adherents fall short of the able-bodied, heterosexual ideal: he notes that Butler's hypothesis of gender trouble might be resignified with regards to queer/disability studies to feature the ways in which ablebodied heterosexuality is both necessary and outlandish. This unreachable ideal, which joins a paradigm of embodiement with sexuality, is enmeshed with the ideal of normalcy portrayed by Davis. McRuer argues that, similar to heterosexuality, the performance of normalcy is both undefined and universal and: "if its hard to deny that something called normalcy exist, it's even harder to pinpoint what it is" (McRuer 7). At the edges encompassing abled-bodied normalcy, McRuer tracks down a compelling critique of the ever fluctuating able-bodied heterosexual ideal. He recommends that a marginal disabled-and-queer "crip" position is an essentially adept vantage for a contestation of contemporary stages of heterosexual abledbodiedness as well as its political manifestation, contending that crip theory can speak back to both nondisabled and disabled liberalism and, considerably more significant to nondisabled and disabled neoliberalism. McRuer contends that crip encounters and epistemologies ought to be integral to counter neoliberalism and access elective ways of being.

Gay and disabled writer Firdaus Kanga does not use his marginal position to critique neoliberalism, however; he instead uses his marginality to zealously affirm right-wing politics. *Trying to Grow* by Firdaus Kanga, shows in the germ a disability politics that shores up and validates hegemonic standards of economic competition and cultural valuation within a recognizably neoliberal paradigm. Through his passionately elitist narrator Brit, Kanga presents a new version of ability in which fortitude of mind and spirit are prioritized over the able body, and which represents a vision of neoliberal masculinity in which qualities of mind and character become the sole determinants of success. Kanga toys with the ideas of normalcy in relation to the ideas of capitalism, retaining the sense that capitalism is best for individual and collective progress, but revising the implication of this ideology for disabled people. While Davis has suggested that the norm was meant to apply not only to moral qualities but to the body, we see in Kanga an attempt to extract a moral from a physiological ideal.

The essential basis of Disability Studies is that disability is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, a system that produces subjects by differentiating and marking bodies. This comparison of bodies legitimates the distribution of resources, status, and power within a biased social and architectural environment. As such, disability has four aspects: first, it is a system for interpreting bodily variations; second, it is a relationship between bodies and their environments; third, it is a set of practices that produce the able-bodied and the disabled; and fourth, it is a way of describing the inherent instability of the embodied self. Culture directs and gratifies individual needs very differently in different societies due to their particular values and thereby not only affect emotions, perceptions, feelings and thoughts of the individual, but also characterize a different way of life. The characteristics of consciousness emerging out of a culture may differ in degree but not in kind. Cultural pressures are among the dominant factors that influence the basic personality pattern, feelings toward parents, the siblings, the peer groups and the other socio-economic and political groups, feelings and attitudes towards the same and the opposite sex and the sense of guilt, emotions and hostility connected therewith, etc. These fundamental values of a culture, to which a person belongs, lend a pattern to his basic consciousness, a pattern that gets injected in the individual-self in interaction with the primary and secondary groups of that culture. Culture is powerful and pervasive, changing the character of our biological drives, affecting our thinking, our emotions and our perceptions.

As Literature informs and informed, it also includes the locales of people who suffer any sort of imperfections and how this imperfectness is treated as disability. The supposed society that utilizes the term ‘special’ for the people with the imperfectness of the people that create problems to them in adopting the world as their own or to the world that belongs to them yet the society that grabs its hand of help when they are needed for a disable person. People are impaired, society cripples as brought up by Petra Kuppers:

> Disability culture is the difference between being alone, isolated, and individuated with a physical, cognitive, emotional or sensory difference that in our society invites discrimination and reinforces that isolation—the difference between all that and being in community. Naming oneself part of a larger group, a social movement or a subject position in modernity can help to focus energy, and to understand that solidarity can be found—precariously, in improvisation, always on the verge of collapse. (Kuppers 109)

In both his fictional and nonfictional works, Kanga disrupts any piety encompassing disability, and particularly dismisses the mode of asexual objectification repeatedly elucidated by Garland-Thompson, as he composes sexually voracious, not to mention unforgiving, critical, elitist, and egoistic narrators. Inferable from the personal or semiautobiographical turn in his works, Kanga’s biography is relevant to reading his works. Firdaus Kanga, a Parsi who grew up in Bombay, started his vocation in India as a journalist publishing stories in Indian magazines, and later emigrated to the United Kingdom following the publication of his two full-length works, the semi-autobiography novel *Trying to Grow* (1989) and the travel memoir *Heaven on Wheels* (1991). Of the two works, *Trying to Grow* has been the more significant in terms of breaking taboos surrounding disability as well as homosexuality, and has likewise gathered more noteworthy acknowledgement for its literary execution. While *Heaven on Wheels* has remained moderately more obscure, *Trying to Grow* had a high profile afterlife when it was adapted into a full length BBC film, Sixth Happiness, for which Kanga composed the film script, and in which he played the role of the principal lead.

Firdaus Kanga is a marginalized writer and the stereotypical ‘Other’. Kanga’s semi-autobiographical novel *Trying to Grow*, portrays the lived experiences of Brit, a severely disabled person. In a world dominated by abled and heterosexual people, Kanga as an individual and as a writer is a departure from the norms, both literally and figuratively. His physicality does not belong to or fall under the class of the accepted norms of what is viewed to be the ‘normal body’ or ‘abled-bodied’ and for this reason in every aspect of life he faces discrimination. His sexual orientation further estranges him from mainstream society. From an early age, people are taught and forced to think in terms of the binary ‘normal’—‘abnormal’ paradigm enducing a social phenomenon that other individuals who do not conform to the socially accepted norm. Therefore, sexualities and bodies are forced to conform to an ideal and when peoples’ functioning or biological composition does not fall within these standards, they are deemed inferior or ‘Other’ and are conveniently excluded from the mainstream society. According to Alice Hall, disability is created through a social cycle: through the relationship between an individual with impairment and the society in which they live. Society disables individuals by barring or discriminating against them and creating affective, sensory, cognitive or compositional boundaries. Along these lines, disabled people are often thrown into hostile and oppressive conditions due to the prevalence of such discourses.

Like the author, Brit is a boy with osteogenesis imperfect who, his doctor confirmed, would break his bones often, would never walk, would never have teeth and if he survived at all, would grow up to be only four feet tall. The only ‘silver lining' according to the doctor was that the disease would burn itself out when he is in his late teens.

Trying to Grow is a bildungsroman that investigates Brit's experience of growing up in Bombay in the 1970s and 1980s, and is as much about his family's response to his disability as his physical and social experience of his own body. Similarly as with any bildungsroman, the chief focal point of the plot is the young man's endeavour to break free of his necessarily protective parents and to carve out an autonomous life. *Trying to Grow* tells the story of Brit's emergence as a writer through the crucible of his struggles against his father's anti-disability bias, his realization that he is bisexual in a deeply homophobic society, and his fight for economic autonomy. The underlying argument of *Trying to Grow* is that Brit's childhood and adolescent difficulties equip him with the fierce honesty and independence of mind that literary production requires. Brit establishes his toughness as a writer in the self-description that marks the denouement of *Trying to Grow*, as he appropriates the language of ridicule and exclusion to describe his own body. Brit looks in the mirror long and hard and provides the following brutal description of his own body:

> My neck squat as a toad's and my hollow shoulders, one higher than the other like Richard the Third's, my ribcage thrust forward so that it bulged at the centre and sloped down at the sides, and below that my legs thin as a famine child's, the shins bowed as if some kid had plastered on some clay as a joke, an afterthought. (Kanga 200)

Brit's inclusion of the most detailed description of his body toward the end rather than the beginning of the narrative creates in that body an object that is processed by his narrative ability, as opposed to literary prosthesis that will compel narrative. Especially when this description is perused in the light of the numerous descriptions of male beauty that pepper the text, the brutality of Brit's characterization of his body is heightened through the contrast with the other bodies of *Trying to Grow*. Description here is a demonstration of self-procession, as, rather than the body described presenting a motivation to read Brit's story. Brit recounts the narrative of how he has become qualified to describe his body.

The novel opens with Brit's father taking him to a holy man called Wagh Baba in the hope that he would be able to cure him. While from the beginning Sera, Brit's mother, perceives him as a normal person with a "problem," Brit's father, Sam cannot do likewise. He looks remorseful and tragic when he talks about Brit and tries every possible solution for Brit's osteogenesis imperfect. These include not only frequent visits to doctors but also ingestion of pulverized pearls and bone marrow of goat, the rubbing of almond oil on the legs, Parsi prayers, the services of a woman who claimed she could cure Brit with electricity generated from her body, and lastly the blessings of the questionable Wagh Baba. Sam's attitude toward Brit's disability mirrors the influence of the medical model on most people in India and their battle to bring a semblance of 'normality' or improved functionality to the lives of disabled people they may be close to or concerned about.

Trying to Grow centres on relationships, and the character studies of the novel are often an outgrowth of Brit's associations with his many caregivers. As Brit is physically fragile in his childhood and remains small as an adult, and because he lives in a city without significant disability infrastructure, he is accompanied almost continuously by aides and caregivers. During Brit's early childhood and adolescence, these caregivers are Brit's family members, whose caregiving role provides a formative context for Brit. During Brit's initial years these caregiving relationships are not only practical but are also compassionate in nature, as he relies upon his parents and sister for guidance as well as for forward propulsion. However, there is a great deal of dissonance in the emotional help provided by Brit's family, as, while he engages in constructive relationships with the women in his household, his relationship with his father is generally ill-disposed. As he matures, Brit becomes increasingly able to defeat his father in battles of will and to rebut his father's incessant discrimination, and figures out how to maintain an increasingly high degree of intellectual autonomy despite practical dependence.

Brit’s father Sam Kotwal, stands in stark contrast to the very courageous caregiving of his wife and Brit’s mother, Sera, whose strength and determination perhaps upsets gendered assumptions. The tenor of Sera’s providing care is established in the scene of Brit’s birth, when, as the doctor explains Brit’s prognosis and litanies, the challenges he and the Kotwal family can expect, she breaks into relentless laughter both at his gloomy negativity and at the face of her new-born. All through Brit’s childhood, Sera continues to safeguard him from the insults of the medical establishment as she invalidates the doctors and religious healers who want to affect a cure upon her seriously disabled child. At the point where Sam bows under the weight of his existential concerns for Brit, Sera centers upon the practicalities of his existence. In spite of the fact that Brit frequently alludes to her fortitude as her brave act to mean it is somewhat of a performance, Sera becomes all the more valorous in his eyes for suppressing her frustrations and doubts so that she can offer consistent support. Sera is so reliably valorised in Brit’s narrative that her intricacy as a character is quite limited, and she works essentially as the gold standard by which Sam falls.

Dolly, Brit’s older sister, is also established as a contrast to Sam, but, unlike Sera, evolves as a character as she and Brit grow up in a mutually constitutive caregiving relationship. As children, Brit and Dolly both take advantage of one another, and manipulate expectations about caregiving transactions. Brit’s name, “Brit,” is actually in part a taunt Dolly offered him at birth, as it refers to both his brittle bones and Great Britian (Kanga 25). Dolly also abuses Brit’s trust when he is a child and she encourages him to drink carbonated water at a canteen, with the result of his getting the hiccups and breaking two ribs. On a later occasion, Brit blackmails Dolly into not going on a date, with the motivation of “enforcing my rights” to prevent potential marriage and thereby keep her in the family home to provide care. However, for both Dolly and Brit, this sort of childish selfishness gives way as they grow up, and for Brit in particular a relinquishing of his presumed right to Dolly’s labour is a turning point in his maturation and development. His resolute hope that Dolly will not marry and leave the Kotwal household eventually gives way to a role reversal, in which he convinces her that she ought to leave her caregiving role in favour of a distant suitor. Dolly’s exit is a key to her own maturation as well as Brit's, as she becomes an adult by pursuing her own happiness, and leaving off the roles of doting daughter to Sam and caregiver to Brit. There is a reversal of the pattern identified by Judith Feder and Carol Levine, who have noted that many representations of women in caregiving roles employ the type of the "saintly caregiver" who proves her worth by choosing self-abnegation and poverty as they are subsumed by a caregiving role. Dolly is depicted as being in the right when she does exactly the opposite, leaving Brit to make his own way as she leaves to build a life for herself.

Sam, unlike Dolly and Sera, is not successful in establishing boundaries between his identity and that of his son, and gives in to the sort of blurring of identities or over-identification with Brit that his wife and daughter both successfully avoid. While from the moment of Brit's birth Sera and Dolly are shown to find humour in Brit's disability, Sam is already defensive and sensitive about his son's body. When Dolly suggests that they "call him Brit! That's short for brittle" Sam argues back that "that's very cruel" because "you don't call a Mongol kid Mong," by which he evidently means a child with Down Syndrome (Kanga 27). Sam then bends "over the cradle" to kiss "his fractured hopes" (Kanga 196). Sam's mixture of sympathy and disappointment becomes an ongoing problem as Brit grows, as Sam remains in a static state of inadaptability, shame, and disbelief as regards his son's disability. The scale of the tragedy Sam perceives is most readily evident in a later scene in which he comforts his neighbour Jeroo, who has lost her deaf daughter to a human trafficking scheme. Sam implies a symmetry between Jeroo's inability to adjust to the permanent loss of her daughter Tina, and his own inability, many years after Brit's birth, to accept that he has "a son who's a stunted cripple" (Kanga 39).

Sam's disappointment is situated in the desire for a very specific mode of professional, generational progress within a father and son relationship, and Sam's perceiving what he takes to be regression in that relationship instead. Sam's obsession with what he perceives to be Brit's lack of earning potential is especially interesting given that the Kotwal family has a decent financial endowment through the maternal line. While Sam is only a modest earner, the whole family has enough money through Sera to accommodate for Brit's necessities endlessly. Hence, Sam's unending distress that his son cannot compete is situated in abstract desire rather than practicality. Brit, earnestly absorbs this desire for career success and money that extends beyond a practical need for the same, but differs from his father in that he believes he can achieve. It is not the challenge of capitalism that hurts Brit, but his own father's attempts to eliminate him from career aspiration and valuation. Brit relates how, when one party guest asks what Brit means to make his profession, Sam leaps to avoid the question with embarrassing level of vigour, saying not to be ridiculous and adds that life's tough enough for him as it is. And that he has said it a number of times. He tells the guest as to how in the world do you think he can go out and rival with all the youngsters overflowing with energy. Sam very telling parodies Brit's life choices by recommending that Brit might, like his father, find a rich wife. In a later scene Brit confronts his father with the kind of remarks he has apparently made a million times, and tells his father that his protective discouragement has made him feel as though he were not a man and that he should not have been alive.

Nonetheless, Brit does not surrender to feelings that he has no business being alive; but Sam does. Sam's defensive self-destruction can be perused as a reversal of numerous accessible models of disability narrative, as following his catalytic function in Brit's life, and as a result of his powerlessness to cope with the fact of Brit's disability, Sam dies. A reading through Mitchell and Synder's theory of *Narrative Prosthesis* enables an understanding of Sam as the character who is set apart from the novel's opening scene:

> the (re) mark upon disability begins with a stare, a gesture of disgust, a slander or derisive comment upon bodily ignominy, a note of gossip about a rare or unsightly presence, a comment about the unsuitability of deformity for the appetites of polite society, or a sentiment about unfortunate circumstances that bring disabilities into being. (Mitchell and Synder 55)

At the point where we are acquainted to Sam through Brit's narration, we see Sam's superstitious weakness as opposed to Brit's deformity becoming the primary target of criticism and contemptuous comments. The novel begins on a bus, where Sam shares the story of his son with another Parsi commuter. Be that as it may, regardless of Sam's endeavour to draw attention to his disabled son, it is Sam who bears the brunt of his interlocutor's judgement:

> 'Shame on you!' insisted the old man. 'Educated, speaking so well and going to a mumbo-jumbo Baba.'
>
> Father laughed. 'If my old school friends could see me doing this they'd jump out of their tailored suits. So would I, if I didn't know how desperate a man could get. (Kanga 4)

Sam's desperation rather than Brit's disability is set apart as the socially abnormal. This is not to suggest that Brit does not likewise encounter his disability as a stigmatized position over the course of the novel; yet it is Sam's occasionally pathetic desperation that presents the simple device which is used to compel the narrative, and eventually annihilates or rectifies the mode which Mitchell and Synder identifies. Sam's weakness inaugurates narrative but is ultimately eliminated as "narrative punishes its own prurient interests by overseeing the extermination of object of its fascination" (Mitchell and Synder 57). Sam's death is additionally intriguing in that it is outlined as an escape from hopelessness and stress. In proposing what lay behind Sam's decision to attempt to go across a bustling street blindfolded the day after Dolly's wedding, Brit straightforwardly recommends that the emotional demands of providing care, within the context of a difficult life and a fragile character, provoked Sam's self-destructive demonstration:

> He had been on his own almost all his life. He'd been through school and climbed up the bank ladder, met Sera and had me, which was harder than climbing. And he'd fought, sure as Sera had fought but without her brave act to keep him safe. Because he never stopped feeling; he couldn't pretend to

> himself that everything was all right. Maybe he looked at life too straight. I knew how he must have felt. Being able to shut his eyes and move, for once. Without worrying whether Sera would go off balance or Brit would break a leg or he'd lose that new job which paid him half of what he used to get at the bank. Such fun, such bliss. I mean, there's only so much you can go through. After that you've got to take a break. (Kanga 169)

While Brit is not an active agent in Sam's self-destruction, he does go through apologia or a justification process that is a reveberation of narratives in which the disabled person is killed, or in which the disabled person's self-destruction is explained. In the novel, we see Brit giving an elaborate defence of Sam's choice to die. This progression between the life-writing and the novel becomes more compelling when considered in light of the fact that Kanga's real father Jamshed likewise killed himself. Brit's reading of Sam's self-destruction as a demonstration of forgivable cowardice or excessive sensitivity, and especially using the justification involving education and the marketplace Brit has provided, carries with it an implied examination, as Sam cannot endure the adversity that Brit can.

Aside from this act of self-directed violence, however, Sam does frequently lash out at Brit to express his frustration, and subsequently become as much a wellspring of affliction for Brit as Brit is for him. Sam's intentional verbal attacks and unintentional blunders are too numerous to even think about checking, as they accentuate pretty much every communication between father and son. The most important conflict between Sam and Brit in *Trying to Grow* is the scene wherein Sam states his position over his son by physically spanking him; it is a scene in which Sam asserts his authority over his son, but which actually empowers Brit to attest his toughness. Brit tells us that Sam had been really made over some childish mischief:

> Then he spanked me and spanked me and said I was cheeky, and I said 'is that all? I'm not scared, you know.' I really

> wasn't because spanking was to a fracture what a firework is to the A-bomb. Besides, I wanted to laugh, because every time Sam brought his hand down he hesitated, looking for a target that wouldn't crack. (Kanga 52)

The spanking is developmental for Brit, however not in the way that Sam had intended. Rather than Brit's learning his place in the sense of learning that his father is an authoritative figure, Brit sees his father's hesitation and vulnerability about how to handle his disabled son as comedic. Brit aces the circumstances, and this represents a defining moment in the novel as, while Sam's verbal abuse of Brit continues after this scene, Brit is less and less discouraged or influenced by it. As Sam says, Brit demonstrates he is capable of taking it like a man, yet Brit simultaneously has the understanding that his father does not have comparable fortitude.

Sam can be read as something of a reader substitute, in that he ceaselessly articulates stereotypes and assumptions about disability which Brit then at point proceeds to discredit in word and deed. Sam's depressing presumptions about Brit's future are a received imaginary which Brit opposes through argument. Brit's self-representation and self-attestation is thus at play on two levels, as he gets the better of Sam within the moment he narrates as well as by narrating the moment, and in doing as such discredits not only his father's assumptions, but those of the able-bodied audience Sam represents. Brit narrates Sam's vulnerability in contrary to his own gumption, and in doing so, makes himself less vulnerable to the sorts of assumptions Sam represents.

That Brit can, indeed, compete with the young men Sam identifies as bursting with energy is exhibited through the character of Cyrus, who arrives in *Trying to Grow* just as Sam's impact upon Brit begins to wane. Cyrus assumes a significant part in Brit's emergence as an independent man and writer. Besides from his sexual relationship with Brit, Cyrus engages with him as both a guide and a competitor, and effectively demonstrates to Brit that he can rival with any able-bodied male. Cyrus enters *Trying to Grow* as an object of sexual interest, however his and Brit's relationship progressively turns into a demonstrating ground for Brit, who advances from boyish adulation of Cyrus to intellectual independence through their adoration and contention. The chance of balance and contest in spite of a great disparity in the two men's physical strength and social position becomes the proof against Sam's despondency.

In spite of the fact that Cyrus does not arrive until the second section of *Trying to Grow*, his emergence is anticipated in the portrayal of the body that puzzle the first segment of the novel. Brit's interest in strong male bodies is established from the first pages of the narrative, wherein he appreciates the dong of both a faith-healer and a Playgirl model. The child Brit is both an admirer of male beauty and mindful of what he perceives as his own lack of the same, and even as he admires the male body as an onlooker, he registers a combination of envy and desire when he is made to contrast his own disabled body with the firm little hips and strong, straight chests of other children. However, Brit's childish envy is in every case less intense than the sentiments Brit attributes to Sam, who indulges fantasies of an imaginary son:

> "I can't quite believe Brit is the way he is. I keep thinking I know it sounds stupid, but I keep thinking that one day the real Brit will jump out of his body; a Brit who's six feet tall with long legs that he swings in great strides." Sam smiled a helpless smile. (Kanga 97)

At the point where the imaginary Brit shows up in the Kotwal household, it is little wonder Brit's response is conflicted. Cyrus both gives Brit a sexual thrill, and makes him envious. Brit's reaction to Cyrus is a combination of hope and self-consciousness; for every physical characteristic Brit admires in Cyrus, he finds in his own body its anti-type. Brit meets this six-feet-tall-guy and his first response was to turn his chair so that Cyrus would not be able to see his legs. Brit watches Cyrus grin with each solid white tooth in his mouth and becomes too self-conscious to smile back. Brit saw his lantern-jawed grin in the mirror and turned it off. However, the unevenness that Brit feels so acutely is by and large what Cyrus manages to dissipate when his aunt introduces Brit as a poor, handicapped boy. Cyrus immediately contradicts her, and before long takes Brit on as a protégé, proving to Brit that, despite the fact that he is handicapped, he does not need to be poor.

Cyrus apprenticeship of Brit starts with submissive impersonation on Brit's part. Brit tells us of how he stopped reading poetry because Cyrus does not like poetry he was of the view that there was no point of going crazy over beautiful stanzas if he could not share them with Cyrus. Brit announces, to his parents' delight, that he intends to study law so that he can become a solicitor rather than pursuing his writing, a choice maybe prompted by Cyrus's comment that expresses that writing drag their feelings up a hill and let go. What you read is the crash. Cyrus's later admission that he surrendered a promising career as a violinist to pursue law because he felt that battling cases would satisfy his brain more than making music underscores Brit's inevitable re-visitation to writing, the pursuit he finds intellectually satisfying. However, Brit's return to the page comes with a significant contrast, as, while before he met Cyrus he looked to literature for emotional satisfaction, Brit is recently drawn with writing as a way of making money. Brit's assertion that he is a man very much like Cyrus is a man comes only a few paragraphs before his memory of writing and selling his first story. He wrote a story about a man who discovers he was the last leaf on the tree. It got published and Brit got the cheque.

Brit's growing accomplishment as a writer is key to the second of his triumphs in *Trying to Grow*. Brit's appropriation of Cyrus's girlfriend, Amy, is a victory which grows out of his and Amy's common love of books. This girlfriend theft happens inside an exceptionally unconventional circle of drama, as Cyrus, after leaving off homosexual activities with Brit starts bringing Brit along on his and Amy's dates because he thinks the pair are better suited to one another. However, this honourable or magnanimous act on Cyrus's part never fully goes too far into good cause, since Cyrus does nothing to facilitate the pairing beyond bringing the two similar minds together, and enduring a great deal of rudeness from Brit before Brit understands his true feelings for Amy. Brit's abhorrence of Amy is situated in the way that she has taken Cyrus, and Brit's eventual fondness for Amy is based in her relationship with Cyrus, as he informs her quite directly during an argument: “why do you think I want you? Because you are Cyrus’s girl I can’t have him, so I’ll settle for next best” (Firdaus Kanga 212). While other instances in the text suggest Brit has a more direct affection for Amy, the fact remains that her worth is expanded in his eyes because of her previous relationship. Brit’s desire of and love for Cyrus are both at play in his fascination with Amy, as Brit makes clear when he watches Amy and Cyrus kissing: “if I were him, just a little like him” (Kanga 197).

However, Amy, for her part, chooses Brit out of sheer reverence and specifically communicates this admiration through a metaphorical comparison when she discloses to Brit that he is a lot bigger than many people, possibly even Cyrus. Amy’s validation of Brit depends, once more, upon the presence of the able-bodied young man, whose accessibility as a romantic alternative is the most important context of Brit and Amy’s relationship. Cyrus empowers Brit’s answer to Sam, who has recently joked about Brit’s finding a wife, and has informed Brit very straightforwardly that he would never succeed in finding a sexual accomplice. While the fascination between Cyrus and Brit is genuinely sexual. The final bonding between Amy and Brit appears to have more to do with competition than sex: when the book closes, Cyrus has departed, and Brit has apparently accomplished the heterosexual relationship and financial autonomy that he was told by Sam that he would never accomplish.

Throughout the novel one would come across Brit’s relentless longing for achieving dignity for the disabled people. He seems to suggest that the basic consideration of a human being is often denied to a disabled person. In the novel, the writer presents the extent to which social stigmas attached to disability affect a person. Brit is presented as an uncompromising character who faces each circumstances strongly, in spite of society’s endeavours to crush him down. Even while encountering the sympathetic attitude of society that rejects of a disabled person’s possibilities, Brit attempts to be different. As the novel’s title suggests, Brit tries to grow inspite of his disadvantages. It can be read as a typical example of fictional representation of disability as it captures some of the finest aspects of survival of disabled people in India.

Trying to Grow can be considered as a genuine and understandably authentic engagement with the subject of disability and social stigma considering the disability of its author. It is probably because of this consciousness that the novel often presents Brit, as a model for disabled people, by and large, as a person who focuses on his abilities rather than his impairments. Brit seems to display that it is the obligation of the disabled people to prove their unique abilities and giftedness to the society so as to empower themselves to claim equal treatment as Siddhant K. Mishra discussed elsewhere, that disabled persons are compensated by being gifted in some ability or workmanship, and that these people are exceptionally gifted. Ashutosh Singh also seems to mention about the capability of Brit that he grew up in more ways than one, and did not permit his disabilitating disease to beat him. However, the talents and capabilities of the disabled persons always go unrecognized; as on account of Brit, even their unique skills do not suffice for equivalent treatment. The novel's engagement of disability likewise brings about uncovering the preconceived notions latent in social psyche of disability and disabled people.

The prolonged existence of stigmatic perceptions of disability makes it easy for one to critique it through an appraisal of the parameters of exclusion/inclusion working underneath the surface of this stigma. In fact, *Trying to Grow* can be approached as written not only to present a worldview of the disabled but also to critique the intricate ways in which the stigma operates itself in the day to day life of the disabled. For example, when Brit and Amy, his 'normal' girlfriend, are together on the beach exchanging kiss, Brit assumes the possible interpretations of their relationship by the overall population. For him the most plausible understanding of them would be that his beloved is after his wealth, or the expectation of divine reward or for the simple feeling of pity. Brit says that they were examining them, as though they were the clouds or the sea or the rocks. The people were talking as to what she sees in him? If she is with him out of pity, they said that God would reward her for her good deeds. Also some were pondering that she might be with him for his fortune. The lovers overheard the conversations of the public which expressed the pervasiveness of a stigmatic order of things: "At least they should not come out, such people. Then loving in public—it's too much"

(Kanga 253). Further, someone added saying that such people that is the disabled are often God’s favourites; and that is why he makes them different. Another retorts back saying that he was wrong and that the disabled people are a punishment by God. Someone seems to warn the urchins saying that they should not laugh at the sight of such person, or else the next time when they are born they will be as unfortunate as Brit. It seems that people could not bear the sight of the company of a normal person with a disabled one. There seems to be another person with dhoti, who says, that possibly something is wrong with her inside, we can’t see it. And that is the reason why she had to marry this cripple. She cannot find anyone else. In this way, the novel critically dives into the construction of the disabled in the social psyche. This incident not only exemplifies the profound rootedness of exclusionary tendencies but also delineates the way the exclusionary propensities that acquire permanence paralyse the dream of equivalent treatment for the disabled.

The consummation of *Trying to Grow* is all but a textbook example of what McRuer has described as ‘heteronormative epiphanies’ but with one difference : while McRuer noticed that disabled characters frequently play a key but most often accessory role in these epiphanies, here we discover Cyrus as the strangely willing catalytic disappointment when Brit gets the girl. Cyrus accordingly takes on the role that McRuer identifies with bodies which are constantly queer and disabled, in that Cyrus satisfies the role of sites on which the epiphanic moment can be staged. Cyrus enabling of Brit is epiphanic in that Cyrus permits Brit to see the potential he had from the beginning, and, in a sense, to become the person he is, despite Sam’s denials of the same. Brit’s prosperity at finding sexual accomplice and making money not just empowers him to write in the practical sense, but supplies the matter of his composition just as the justification behind his literary project.

In *Trying to Grow*, as in the rest of Kanga’s oeuvre, the politics of success and failure seem to validate rather than challenge the vision of variety envisioned by Davis. Kanga’s gay and disabled as opposed to McRuer’s crip/queer politics suggest a vision of how systems of normalcy latent in variety might be modified to accommodate the disabled body, without becoming accommodating in different respects. As Davis contends in *The End of Normal*, while the valorisation of difference in recent decades may seem to completely efface or replace the ideal of normalcy, it actually relies upon the elision of certain difference, as "what is suppresses from the imaginary of diversity, a suppression that actually puts neoliberal diversity into play, are various forms of inequality, notably economic inequality, as well as the question of power" (Davis 13). A particularly consistent elision, Davis contends, is that condition of inequality of health or the powerless body, the disabled body. Accordingly, in its omission from a discourse of diversity, disability becomes an atavism addressing the rest of normal toward the end of the normal. Rather than scrutinizing power from without, Kanga embeds himself at the focal point of a brazenly neoliberal discourse by reconsidering the location of power in terms of a series of triumphs over other men. In his portrayals of authorial, sexual, and economic success Kanga modifies but also zealously affirms the details of a politics of ability and achievement.

Trying to Grow drew a decent bit of critical attention, its greater part echoing the characterization made by G.G., in a review in West Coast Review of Books, who noted that it offers a formidable unique rendition of everyday routine experiences in a shockingly awful way. Maria Couto writing for the *Times Literary Supplement*, notes that the narrative is momentous for its unselfconscious detailing of what it is like to be four foot for nothing, to move just with the guide of a wheelchair, and to have a soul which longs and a body overflowing with irrepressible sexuality. She appreciates his ear for the spoken word, his frequent reflections on the moral rights and obligations of individuals within the closely knit system of Indian family, and his wit, warmth and humour. Salman Rushdie, in the introduction to his and Elizabeth West's anthology of recent Indian writing—*Mirrorwork: Fifty Years of Indian Writing: 1947-1997*—remarks that in his various writings Firdaus Kanga has transcended the physical affliction with high style and genuine comic brio.

Discourses of disability have for the most part stayed disregarded in literary narratives. Kanga's narrative of his lived experience, the experience of living inside a disabled body, and that of his experience of queer sexuality offers an interesting articulation of reality. He sheds light on the human complexities, the myths as well as assumptions that construct disability and the inconvenience of heteronormativity that the disabled face in regular daily existence. In his literary narrative, disability and queer sexuality is at the focal point of discourse. In *Trying to Grow*, he takes the readers on a detour of his life, presenting the lived experiences of his disabled and queer existence. Kanga has attested the experiences of disability and queer sexuality paving the way for a kind of disability and queer pride. Utilizing a humorous language in his literary narrative he has revisited and opposed discourses that present a biased perspective and social practices, the rigidity and oppressiveness of normal subject positions. His writings acquire an additional significance because he shows that the novel or literature in general, as a significant social structure assumes a crucial role in normalizing discourses about what counts as a normal human being and how it shapes the popular discernments and representations of the queer or the disabled.

CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

God cannot be everywhere. So he has created a father and mother in every family. This concept is a proven fact. Similarly, man cannot assimilate all positive and negative characteristics and their consequences through his very own personal encounters. Literature with its authentic and distinct portrayal of the multifactedness of life, come to its aid. The advent of a great literature marks the defining point in the history of mankind. The noble ideas and ignoble concepts, lofty aspirations and loathing attempts and sacrificing saviours and scheming traitors are portrayed in plenty in literature. Man has both a role model and a wrong model to plainly figure out how to be and how not to be. Hence, literature cannot be simply neglected as a mere amalgamation of fictitious characters and incidents. It is in fact, the invaluable legacy left for the perusal of humanity to form and shape their destiny and lead a contended life.

Literature that deals with disabled characters or studies on disability in particular have significant human values embedded in it. Their portrayal of disabled characters facilitates one’s understanding of them, in order to respect their physical distinction. The philanthropic voices of these writers are keen on liberating society from crippling attitudes and assumptions so that the brutally neglected can have due acknowledgement and meaningful lives. Their works mirrors the society’s prejudiced disposition and injustice towards the disabled people and strongly urge the society to look at life from their perception. Once their strengths and drawbacks are appropriately perceived, there will not be any inhibition for the common lot to embrace the uncommon lot and include them in their midst. Studies on disability thus offer the disabled, a space which is stimulating, liberating and distinctive. To hear the unheard, see the unseen and unravel the unrevealed, the writers land on a bold plan and a broad scope where even a basic phenomenon is viewed with heightened awareness. With their penetrating, incisive understanding of life, such writers unfurl new avenues of learning, at the same time warning people not to be discriminative in their social relationship. The study on disability is thus a battle against discrimination and injustice. C.M. Joad states that man flies in the air like birds, swims in the sea like fish, but he does not know how to walk upon the earth like a human being, for he is slowly losing the virtue of being humane in all its social interaction. The misfortune is more serious in the case of his relationship with the disabled people. Therefore, the need arises to appropriately comprehend the world of the disabled people who are debilitated, besides their genetic factors, by the excesses of man-made frameworks.

As elaborated in the foregoing chapters, the select fictional works present the stereotypical perceptions of disability on the one hand and the manner in which people with disabilities create their perceptions of themselves and the society in the midst of the social stigma on the other. In the Indian context, the fictional representation of disability can be approached as critiques of the way the stigmatic discourse of disability is constructed and maintained in Indian societies. The novels under study stand testimony to the fact that the Indian fiction in English has produced some of the powerful articulations of disability. The fictional representations of disability in India contain two major tendencies: depictions of the stigmatic social construction of disability and the disabled people's impressions of themselves and their disability. It is apparent in the analyses of the novels that the disabled people by and large are compelled to surrender to the demands of the apathetic attitude of the society, and are unable to live in accordance to their perceptions of themselves. In fact, the disabled people are found to be at the mercy of the 'normal' people for their life. Stephanos Efthymiadis highlights in this line that : "People who were unable to walk or speak like the majority, or men and women who by their impairment or disfigurement did not look like other human beings, would always incite both positive and negative reactions such as compassion, contempt and laughter" (Efthymiadis 397). However, the people with impairments do not seem to be content with such acts of kindness from the others, feeling that this only leaves them with a tarnished self-esteem. Christian Laes appears to support the point that low level self-esteem for the disabled people is brought about by certain cultures that recommend mutilation as punishment for crimes which is not found as a phenomenon relating to a particular country but it is something that prevails globally. In his view negative importance to abnormal difference runs like a red thread where mutilation was a punishment usually inflicted upon criminals –the equation of bodily mutilation with misconduct was consequently easily made.

Characteristic forms of stigmas attached to disability have been present in cultural artefacts in India right from the ancient times. It is a widely accepted fact that representations of disability in India throughout history are marked by depictions of stigmatisation and othering. Associating disability with neediness and evil besides considering it as reprehensible and divine curse, arguably, is the principle justification for the stigmatic attitude of the society towards the people with impairments and their exclusion. The long prevalence of disability related stereotypes and stigmatic discernments in India are to be approached closer with reference to the broad realm of 'disability studies'.

Considering 'disability studies' as the theoretical base of the current study, the issues and concerns addressed by the writers through their fictional representations are looked at with reference to the pioneering presumptions drawn from theoretical works that fall under 'disability studies'. As an area of academic interest, 'disability studies' as per Simi Linton "introduces a disability reading to a range of subject matter" (Linton 518). She clarifies that we push individuals to examine how disability as a category was created to serve certain ends and how the classification has been institutionalized in social practices and intellectual conventions. Besides, disability studies in Linton's view points to weave disabled people back into the structure of society, thread by thread, and theory by theory. The work carried out by scholars of disability studies as an academic interest and as a collective towards contributing to integrate the disabled back into the society has, arguably, resulted from the urgency they felt to provide better visibility to the concerns of the disabled people, as they are one of the least organized among the oppressed minority groups. Tobin Siebers observes that people with disabilities are not often considered as a single group, particularly as a politically group, on the grounds that their identities are too different from one another. Siebers suggest the necessity not only to provide them broader consideration and ethical and theoretical visibility as a minority group but also form them part of minority studies:

> People with disabilities build political coalition not on the basis of natural identification but on the basis of health-care needs, information sharing, and support groups. Most obviously, disability requires a broad consideration of identity politics beyond communities of interest based on race, nation, class and gender, and sex, and for this reason, it is crucial both ethically and theoretically to give a place to disability in the field of minority studies. (Siebers 11)

Further, he urges the academic community to move disability studies from the perspective of both social constructionist and philosophical realist theories, recommending that social construction has characterized the past of disability studies, philosophical authenticity may well be in a position to impact its future. It can thus be argued that, as the disabled people form a minority in any community, any study that addresses the issues faced by the disabled people come under the broad domain of minority studies. Nonetheless, the peculiar condition of the disabled people necessitates a combination of philosophical pragmatist and social constructionist in addressing their issues.

The two fictional works scrutinized in this dissertation addresses disabilities and abnormalities arising out of physical deformities and that of gender related stereotypfication. Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man*, presents gender and other gender related disability problems; whereas in *Trying to Grow*, Firdaus Kanga delineates the protagonists battle with physical deformity. The fictional representations of disability under study are indicative of the impact of the conventionally conceived perceptions of disability and the disabled persons in India.

Bapsi Sidhwa and Firdaus Kanga are both disabled individuals and they have very acutely presented the predicament of the disabled individuals through their works, analyzed in this dissertation. The fact that they have both been in the shoes of their characters gives a more personal tone to their narrative. This dissertation has attempted to study *Ice-Candy-Man* through the lens of disability studies, by putting forth the study of the 'disabled' female gender as the focal issue. It has tried to look into the marginalization of women who metaphorically are regarded as disabled because of their gender. The chapter titled "Projection of Disability in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*," focussed on highlighting the issues of women in a male dominated society, resorting to the metaphorical use of the term 'disability'. Sidhwa's characterisation of her female characters makes her prominent in the literary scene. She is appreciated due to her extraordinary technique of projection of women in a very real and persuading way that it becomes easy for every conscious reader to fathom the issues that she advances. All her female characters possess a specific moral center and demand for their own earned and distinguished identity and recognition. Sidhwa uses the character of Godmother to challenge and rebel against the conventional and patriarchial rules of society. Sidhwa empowers her to handle any circumstance without the assistance of any male member of the locality. She is seen to protect not only her own family women but also rescues other injured, oppressed and abducted women. She acts like any hero of the movie and plays a vital role in successful escape of Ayah from Ice-Candy-Man's house who is legally her husband. Sidhwa's choice of nick name for Rodabai also shows the significance of this character in the novel as godmother and she enjoys her role as mother. Stampfl describes the role of Rodabai as mother in such a way that:

> Sidhwa makes her female characters empowered by providing them multi-layered and all-rounder roles. Her concept of mothering makes the novel more prominent and provides strength and empowerment to her female characters. Her mothering concept is universal not limited to any biological bound. This mothering concept is communal, societal and familial. This mothering concept makes the female united and strong in this novel. (Stampfl 304)

Sidhwa rewards Rodabai with exceptional characteristics that make her strong and influential. She stands as a figure of stability, tradition and morality. She is someone who offer guidance and has associations all over Lahore. Godmother uses the power of her social standing to enforce traditions and the social hierarchy. She is a source of motivation and support for the other female characters of the novel.

Bapsi Sidhwa has very craftily created her female characters which possess every sort of social face. The complete story of the novel, revolves around the role and participation of women in society. She has intentionally infused in her female characters a defiant and radical disposition and thought. In the novel, she very aptly features the problems of women and through the exaggeration and proliferation of feminist issues she strengthens her female characters. Her attitude empowers her characters to challenge just and unjust situation only at the name of female suppression and exploitation. She empowers her women to live and enjoy their lives according to their own will and choice.

In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Sidhwa critiques the stereotypical images of women and fights for their empowerment and emancipation. She guarantees their emancipation by ending the novel on a positive note whereby Ayah is sent back to her home liberated from all forms of subjectivity and domesticity. Sidhwa uncovers the hallowness and the callousness of the patriarchial society. By highlighting domestic violence and sexual harrassement in the novel, Sidhwa attempts to instill a sense of self-identity and self-esteem in women. Women characters play a deterministic role in the novel. They are presented as independent: they have a will of their own, a life of their own. In this novel, Sidhwa challenges the conventional structure that presents women as weak, submissive, passive, acquiescent, timid and emotional. She exposes the sterility of patriarchial society where a woman is denied genuine love and spiritual gratification. She violates the systematic, conventional standards and values in order to secure an unconventional position of women in society, where women are given significance and respect. These protagonists, while on one hand, come alive on account of their realistic presentation, on the other, they serve as the means of consciousness raising among female segments of society.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation entitled “Surmounting Societal Constructs in Firdaus Kanga’s *Trying to Grow*” outlines the protagonists endeavour to grow out of the stigma that surrounds him and tries to pull him down. The novel draws out the protagonists struggle in the growth between roughly from eight years to early twenties. The novelist discloses the attitude of the society toward disability through the words of the doctor, who attends on Brit’s mother at the time of her labour pain. The doctor says that her boy is born with bones as brittle as glass, and adds that the ones in his legs are as sensitive as test tubes. The doctor further adds: “I doubt he’ll ever walk. He’ll probably be toothless, too, his teeth will break as soon as he bites into anything hard” (Kanga 28). But Sera appears to be unperturbed by the misfortune that has befallen on her family and replies:

> Sam that was awful. He’s our son, he’s a boy like any other, only his body has problems. He’ll cope with them more easily than you think; they’ll just be a way of life for him. (Kanga 29)

However, she was trying to grapple with the truth regardless of knowing the stigma attached to disability not only for having a disabled child around, but also for giving birth to one. The seriousness of the foreseen difficulties in having an invalid child at home seems to be heightened by Sera’s words at the time of Brit’s arrival at home with his bone fractured. Sera asks, if the holidays are over. She shows compassion on her disabled child however what upsets her incredibility seems to be the challenges she needs to undergo as a mother to a disabled child. Nevertheless, Sera shields her son along with the help of other members of the Kotwal family. Brit expresses his perception that all the people misunderstand that the disabled are unfit to do anything when the reality is that they are unable to do only something. He says that he was perfectly capable of doing all the things by himself, but people assume that since he is disabled he will not be able to do anything. The fear out of the society’s attitude toward the disability may be simply the reason why Brit, though he himself is differently abled, is terrified of the other people of his kind as he articulates that he was scared of the way handicapped people looked.

Despite the positivism of his mother, and the relatively fair treatment allotted to him at home, owning presumably to his family's social and moral ethos, Brit comprehended that people are not ready to accept the disabled as they are, and they seek all ways to get the condition cured. For example, looking for a solution for his disability Brit's father takes him to Wagh Baba, a witch doctor, who is believed to be a holy man with powers to cure disability, however all his attempts went in vain. Secondly, his disability gradually makes him distanced and alienated. This was supported by the underestimated status of the disabled within the Parsi community. Brit attempts to address this predicament with composure and courage, first, by concealing his inner sentiments by being humorous and normal; he confronted the challenges with a smiling face.

Regardless of his ardent desire to achieve equality with the normal people in the activities he partakes, Brit does not want the society to take pity on his condition; nor does he want others to choose him for prizes thinking about his disability. Brit expresses his dismay when it is exposed in the school as if he is lurking around the deep-end of his class, waiting for someone to do worse than him. He asserts that this is not true and he questions why he should be given prizes. He explains his problems saying that he won prizes all the time for everything from moral science to general science. And that once he even won a prize for nothing. Father Ferra considers the prize of Brit as a 'shining reward' for his strength of spirit, though Brit detests the prize thinking that he does not deserve it. Brit appears to consider his school's resolve to encourage him with prizes and awards even when he does not deserve them, as expressive of the overall attitude of the society towards the disabled. It can be perceived that this is how the perspective of the world goes about the disabled, dismissing how really it affects them and how they really feel about it.

By the end of the novel, we see Brit liberated from the contours of dependence that have characterize his life. Both his parents passes away and his sister, Dolly, resides abroad with her husband. He has likewise severed his romantic connections with both Amy and Cyrus. He is, as he had once dreaded, all alone, with no one to cocoon him physically or emotionally. But the Brit at the end of the novel is a happy Brit. He has managed to bag a publishing contract and decides to continue to live in his Colaba apartment alone. For this purpose, he has also employed workers to have a kitchen that can be accessed at wheelchair level. This Brit has accomplished what Shilpa Anand calls a 'modern disability subjectivity'. He has conquered his insecurities and discovered that he can survive without being dependent on anyone. It is true that Brit is oppressed by several layers of social dynamics. He is a survivor of the demands of hegemonic masculinity with its insistence on physical strength, mobility and ability as well as the stigmatization of people with disabilities. Kanga through *Trying to Grow* succeeds in achieving the questioning of legitimated assumptions and processes of the construction of power relationships that seek to govern and oppress the lives of the physically and mentally non-normative. They thereby initiate and recommend possible dialogues and avenues for change.

Disability Studies has offered us critical approaches with which to re-think and re-assess existing research tools and methods in any discipline. The study enables people to see the world from a different perspective; it has the potential to make people see that the world has been designed to exclude many people: from the wheel chair user to the person with cognitive, emotional, physical, mental, social, gender based disabilities, and people who are segregated from the main society because they do not belong to the group who are deemed as normal people. Disability Studies matters because it points out the obvious, the common, the things no one notices because most of the 'no ones' see themselves living in the mirage of being normal. Disability Studies is a recent and developing area compared to other theories and schools of criticism in literature; nevertheless, works like *Contours of Ableism* by Fiona Kumari Campbell, *Concerto for the Left Hand* by Michael Davidson, *Enforcing Normalcy* by Lennard Davis, *Aesthetic Nervousness* by Ato Quayson, *Disability Aesthetics* and *Disability Theory*, *Extraordinary Bodies* and *Staring: How We Look* by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson have provided avenues for exploration in literary criticism, theory and history.

Disability Studies is very important in today's context because it works to empower the disabled people and moreover it provides an outlet for them to participate in the democratic process as enshrined in the Indian constitution. Besides this, the three wings of Government, that is the legislative, executive and judiciary should work towards providing equity, so that they could be treated equally and avail the opportunities available in the world today. In order to move forward and break down the barriers that still separate many of us from society, we must, along with our allies, work toward not only empowering ourselves, but also empowering those around us so that together we can affect real lasting change. Teaching, learning and working from the Disability Studies perspectives will go a long way in empowering us all.

The study is an attempt to deconstruct the stereotypical image of disability. The purpose and aim of the study is to deconstruct or crack open the constructed images of disability which remain as the barriers in our society. All the stereotypical images or labels should be removed for the active participation of all people in the society; people should change their attitude of treating another people as inferior, incapable, dependent and subhuman. Disability Studies scholars should engage in challenging and questioning the constructed image of disability through the literary representations from Disability Studies perspectives, and must try to work for the removal of attitudinal, environmental, architectural and the different barriers that limits individual progression. In representation, the depiction of person with disabilities should be in such a way as to improve their life standard instead of demeaning it. Also, people with disabilities or those whose are regarded as inferior by the society should stop looking at themselves with negative perception, because if we are strong no one will dare to look down on us.

As far as the constraints of the study, the close examination of disability and representation endeavoured in this dissertation is confined only to these two novels from Indian literature in English. Therefore the study does not cover the depictions of disability in other works, albeit some passing references are made on some of the texts dealing with disabilities. It also presents a detail study of the field of disability studies, and centers on identifying some of the main tendencies in this field. The study focuses primarily on two aspects in the representations of disability, viz., the self perceptions of the disabled people and its activities of social stigma, and the gender based disability problems encountered by women.

Considering the scope for further research, the same project can be extended to comprehend the depictions of disability in other fictional works from both regional languages and English which are not covered in this dissertation, and other genres like drama and poetry in India. There is likewise abundant scope for tracing the foundations of social stigma in India with reference to ancient texts, and other cultural artefacts like performances, paintings and films. The treatment of sexually deviant categories like transgender and the stigma surrounding such identities in India are also worth exploring genuinely. The fictional representations of disability in Indian fiction proliferates depictions of people with various forms of impairment as grappling with the social stigma attached to disability, and the resultant development of their self-perceptions. While considering the portrayals of the disabled in the fictional works as exemplifying persistence of deep rooted stigma, these works can also be considered as contributing towards reintegrating the disposed people back to the social texture of the country. They also bear testimony to the backwardness of the communities introduced not only in facilitating the lives of the differently abled, but also in changing their deep-rooted stigmatized perceptions of people with impairments.

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