

*Case Study*

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- Seena V. Joseph is a special education teacher who is currently working at PCNGHSS Mookkuthala, a government educational institution that is located in the district of Malappuram in Kerala state, India.

Anjitha: What got you inspired in special school education?

Seena: During my school days I had a friend whose sister was suffering from mental impairment. A sense of empathy developed in me as I witnessed the difficulties that my friend's parents experienced while trying to take care of their daughter. Until then I was unaware of such medical conditions. I was curious to know more about disability and other health related issues that has the capability to affect an individual's mind and body. So, I decided to visit a school that was especially designed for children with mental impairments and I became extremely emotional as I stood there watching those little kids standing for their school assembly. This made me realise that I should be able to do something for these children when I become an adult.

Anjitha: What is the basic qualification that one needs to be a special school educator?

Seena: One can enrol for B.Ed in Special Education.

Anjitha: What is your experience in this field?

Seena: I am working in this field since 2015.

Anjitha: What are your teaching strategies?

Seenaa: I want each student of mine to have the benefit of attaining a positive school experience that can help them to improve their confidence, social skills as well as subject knowledge. I prefer to explain each topic using pictorial or graphical representations as it helps me to gain their attention. It activates their interest in listening, as every child is different and so are their capabilities in understanding a subject. I carefully follow to adapt an instructional medium that concentrates on both individual student and class as a whole.

Anjitha: Have you ever found any difficulties that students who have impairments experience while trying to socialise?

Seenaa: Yes, initially these children develop a fear in them when their parents leave them at school. They think that they might not get the same love, care, and attention as rendered by their parents. But once they get to know me, they feel connected, attached, and safe.

Anjitha: Which was the happiest moment in your life as a special school educator?

Seenaa: When they feel secured and comfortable while being with me, they express their love that my words could not define. As you were asking this question, the first face that came to my mind was of Raheez who was a student of mine and one day he became very emotional when I reached late. He was afraid that something serious had happened to me and I still remember him bringing chocolates to me the very next day. I have come across many students in these past years and I would love

to address all of them as my children and every day that I spend with them is special and that makes me happy.

Anjitha: Can you specify any challenges that have come across in your carrier?

Seenaa: Yes, teachers like me are considered as inferior and uneducated. There is a tendency for others to think that I have taken this occupation because I am not capable of doing anything else. This is because they are unaware about the concept of disability and the seriousness of my profession.

Anjitha: What is your opinion on inclusive education?

Seenaa: It is very important as it helps them to socialise with other children of their age. It allows them to learn and grow but while practicing inclusive education, I believe every teacher should be trained and the institution must be barrier free.

Anjitha: According to you what are the major difficulties that the students face while studying in a regular school?

Seenaa: I have seen students who use wheelchair finding it extremely difficult to gain access to different parts of the institution. Thus, lack of appropriate ramp facilities is one major issue that concerns both the students and parents of individuals with physical impairments. Some children, especially girls tend to get urinary infections as they control their bladder because they cannot get access to restrooms. This is because of the architectural negligence that certain institutions have while constructing them.

Anjitha: Can you mention some of the policies that the government has initiated for the benefits of physically impaired individuals and do people get access to their basic rights?

Seenaa: Parents of individuals with impairments have formed a committee which is known as 'Parivaar Kerala'. The association includes parents of children with both intellectual and developmental issues. Though the group is a state federation that has affiliations within the state of Kerala, they also have national connections by associating with 'Parivaar' which is a National Confederation of Parents Organisations (NCPO). Their vision is to empower the families by providing them the basic knowledge of their rightful benefits, to enhance their dignity in the society, and to improve their living environment. Their mission is to avoid discrimination and create awareness. In the year 1979, 'The Kerala State Handicapped Persons' Welfare Corporation' was established to promote and implement schemes and policies that aim to improve the quality of life of individuals who have physical, visual, hearing, and mental impairments. Such organisations try to provide technical and financial support and assistance.

Anjitha: Can you elaborate on the other financial supports that the government of India is providing to individuals with impairments?

Seenaa: There is an insurance scheme known as 'NIRAMAYA' for health initiated by the Government of India. It is a scheme that comes under 'The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities'. It is an affordable

insurance scheme that is available in the entire country and it covers up to one lakh Indian rupee. It helps the family members to manage the treatment facilities including medicines, diagnosis and test charges, dental related issues, surgeries, therapies, and transportation charges.

Anjitha: Are there any initiatives to enhance their employment opportunities?

Seena: There are vocational training centres and these institutions provide training in tailoring, stitching, embroidery works, candle making, printing, book binding, leather work, computer and technical trainings, and much more. It can be considered as an empowerment training course that enables them to gain sustainable employment opportunities.

- Manjula, mother of Vishnu while being pregnant with him was informed by her doctors that her child might have a condition known as hydrocephalus. It is an extra fluid that builds up within the fluid containing cavities of the brain.

Anjitha: Was your doctor supportive and did you feel that your concerns were being answered?

Manjula: Yes, in the initial stages of pregnancy I was unable to follow the routine medical check-ups as my father had passed away. It was during the seventh month of pregnancy, I had my first scanning. Doctors immediately found out certain issues and explained to me about the possible medical conditions that my child might have after birth. I hadn't heard of such conditions before in my life, so I had no idea about what it meant. Then we started learning more about hydrocephalus.

Anjitha: May I know about Vishnu's health condition?

Manjula: By birth, Vishnu had issues in his spinal cord and there was a hole on his back. He had to undergo a surgery after four days of his birth and he was unable to move his legs since that day. Later, he had to go through many more surgeries that have helped him in many ways and regarding his current situation, he cannot walk but he manages to move around the house using his wheelchair and his one kidney does not function properly.

Anjitha: Have you ever faced any difficulties while taking care of Vishnu?

Manjula: When he was little, it was easy for me to carry him but now he is fifteen years old and I find it difficult to lift him. Most of the times, the main issue that we experience is the lack of ramps in public places which makes our travels extremely complicated. So we avoid such outings and spend most of our time indoors. As we are not financially sound, we depend on public transportation and there are passengers and bus drivers who scold us while we take time to mount the bus.

Anjitha: Was your family and relatives supportive?

Manjula: No. They began avoiding our family as they were afraid that we might depend on them for our financial needs. Vishnu's grandparents and relatives hated him and they advised us not to spend or invest money on a child who is not worth it.

- Anjitha: Was the society supportive or have you ever faced any negative experiences?
- Manjula: There are individuals who support us as they see the difficulties that we endure. But, once a group of people visited us and photographed my son, later we came to know that they were circulating this picture with their bank details by seeking financial support and this was done without our knowledge.
- Anjitha: How did Vishnu respond when enrolled into a school and what were the problems that he had experienced?
- Manjula: He was enrolled into a school as the doctors suggested that it might help him to socialise with others. He was afraid to go to school as his classmates were making fun of his appearance and there were times when I have tried advising them by making them understand about Vishnu's condition and the difficulties that he endures.
- Anjitha: Have you come across any financial barriers to meet the needs of medical attention and other basic accessories?
- Manjula: Definitely, we have struggled a lot and nobody was willing to help us during our difficult times.
- Anjitha: Are you aware of the facilities provided by the government for children who have impairments?
- Manjula: Yes, I am aware about few initiatives and there is a unique disability identity card that makes it easy for the government to render support



and other benefits for individuals with impairments. Vishnu also gets scholarships that are given for students with physical impairments.

- Vishnu R. is fifteen years old and is a student of grade ten. He was affected by a condition known as hydrocephalus by birth.

Anjitha: What are your leisure time activities?

Vishnu: I watch YouTube videos and spend most of my time in drawing pictures of my favourite movie actors.

Anjitha: What is your ambition?

Vishnu: I want to become a civil engineer.

Anjitha: Do you like going to school?

Vishnu: No. Initially, I was afraid of going to school. My classmates made fun of me and treated me differently. I feel humiliated when they were not willing to accept me as equal and there were times when I was left alone from their friendship circle. I was happy during the pandemic because the mode of study was online and I felt relaxed to hear that I could sit at home and study peacefully without any worries. But when the school reopened I made new friends who showed no discrimination and they also help me with my wheelchair while I need to go to the restroom.

Anjitha: Have you faced any difficulties while travelling?

Vishnu: Yes, and lack of accessibility has limited me from going out and I feel sad when I am unable to travel like other kids of my age. My parents find it difficult to lift me in places that do not provide ramp facilities and this whole situation is tiring which eventually makes them to think that I better spend my time indoors than going out to experience these struggles. This makes me unhappy.

Anjitha: How do you feel about your teachers?

Vishnu: Some teachers are really good and they pay attention to my learning needs.

Anjitha: Do you feel that the school is providing all the facilities that you need?

Vishnu: Though I cannot gain access to every part of the school, the school authorities have allotted classrooms that are in ground floor with ramp facilities for children like me who are wheelchair users.

This case study is a short analysis of the lived experiences of individuals with impairments, their parents, and teachers. The experiences of the members taken for study is not applicable to every individual with physical impairments and their caregivers but it provides specific details of situations in a certain space and time.

Case study can help to enrich the reader's understanding of the subject. The questions were formulated by taking into consideration the child's age by following the ethical guidelines along with the consent of each participant.

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*Publications*

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## Wonder: Overcoming Hidden Fear of Independence

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**Abstract** - This paper focuses on the basic needs that children require during their developmental stages through the novel *Wonder* (2012) by R.J. Palacio. The theoretical framework used for analysing the novel is *Social Learning Theory*, a developmental psychological analysis propounded by Albert Bandura. The vital paradigm for the successful development of a child can be measured with his/her relationship with family, friends, relatives, and society as their growth is often linked with cultural and social influences. Through the character of August Pullman who is affected by Treacher Collins syndrome, a genetic condition or disorder which left him with a disfigured face, Palacio educates the readers about the problems endured by children with physical impairments. Implication of Bandura's social learning theory to the text reveals how the society should be treating them with equal consideration and care.

**Index Terms** - children with special needs, developmental stages, psychological analysis, social learning theory.

### INTRODUCTION

Childhood determines how successful one can be in handling life; as it lays the foundation of one's ability to recognize his/her identity. While gauging humanity, relationships within family, friendship, love, and fraternity stays as a vital paradigm. The present scenario witnesses numerous broken relationships along with alienation and loneliness but dreams, desires, and ambitions motivate people to move forward in life. Children for instance crave to paint their dreams with vibrant colours and their fairy tales will be complete only with the love and support of their parents. Meanwhile there are few children who need special attention to finish their dream picture as they are victims of physical, intellectual, or emotional impairments. This paper focuses on the requirements of children with physical impairments during their developmental stages that include social, cognitive, educational, and emotional growth.

The novel *Wonder* opens by stating how normal August Pullman, a homeschooler of fifth grade feels about his physical impairment. August by birth was affected by Treacher Collins syndrome, a situation which has left him with a disfigurement on his face. August says,

*I know I'm not ordinary ten-year-old kid. I mean, sure, I do ordinary things. I eat ice cream. I ride bike. I play ball. I have an Xbox. Stuff like that makes me ordinary. I guess. And I feel ordinary. Inside. But I know ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. I know ordinary kids don't get stared at wherever they go. (Palacio 5)*

Disability is a social label tagged to the individuals with impairments and victims like August are forced to fit into this socially constructed terminology. The agony that he feels is clearly evident when he states that he is an ordinary child, which shows that it is the society that does not allow him to feel normal. An innocent child who is unaware about the concept of social exclusion can feel traumatized when he/she is treated differently from the other children. August feels, "If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all. . . the only reason I'M not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way" (Palacio 5). Society that dishonors them with stigmas, also cover them with shame. Complicated prejudices can produce negative impacts in the cognitive development of an individual. The family and society should never fail their role of being an active participant in the development of a child as their encouragement and involvement lays foundation to their future endeavours.

This paper tries to question 'How does an individual feel when people stare at him/her?' One would certainly experience discomfort and embarrassment if they are placed in such a position. The situation of an individual with any physical impairment is more pathetic as they see the whole world staring at them;

which is a stare filled with pity or even disgust. Bandura states, “A great deal of human behaviour is activated by events which become threatening through association with painful experiences” (60). Disdainful approach towards individual who possess impairments can experience a dilemma in how to lead their life successfully. When the inner child is affected by fearful thoughts, it will continue to disturb them even when they grow old. Successful life depends on the good experiences an individual attain from his/her caregivers.

Children during their school days will be vibrant as they are full of passion, dreams, creativity, and imaginations. This stage prepares them to be a part of society by understanding and accepting the outside space other than their home. While stepping into the outer world, they would partake in new tasks or activities which until then were done with parental assistance. Excelling in school activities and getting appreciation for their achievements can invoke pride and joy. If their tiny steps are left unnoticed, a child will create an aura of inferiority complex which gradually leads to seclusion or isolation. Proper acknowledgement for their activities is an assurance for them to proceed in their life with self confidence. A child of ten should feel free to dream but August felt bounded or caged as his thoughts were chained. “I can’t say I always wanted to go to school because that wouldn’t be exactly true. What I wanted was to go to school, but only if I could be like every other kid going to school” (Palacio 7). He was frightened to face the real world because of his condition and the only way he could overcome this is based on the way how people look at him. Right from birth, people treat children like August differently by categorizing them as victims of fate. This is evident when August states that “When I came out of Mom’s stomach . . . the whole room got very quiet” (Palacio 10). A moment of pitiful silence filled up in the room due to the deformity he was naturally gifted with. The children with physical impairments have been marginalized from the mainstream society without any consideration.

Parents, siblings, relatives, and teachers should play the vital role in making these children attain success by making them feel comfortable and equal. Bandura specifies that encouragement and support obtained from parents and friends would make children feel industrious and courageous. August’s dad was

thoughtful and suggested that they are supposed “. . . to help him deal with it” (Palacio14). The family decided to send August to school, considering that it might help him to socialize more with people. The world must provide a space for its residents with equal share of opportunities. Denying the rights of other individuals is not a politically correct ideology. Bandura mentions developmental studies helps children to learn through their observations and negative incentives can attribute to defective behavioural pattern.

August was frightened by the decision of his parents planning him to send to school. He was never worried of meeting young children because he felt that kids do not say things that hurt one’s feelings. He proclaims that it is teenagers or young adults that tend to exploit the emotional feelings of other individuals. Proper education and knowledge to accept individuals with impairments should be provided by family members, and teachers. August tried growing his hair long to ensure that his bangs would cover his eyes by blocking things that he did not desire to see. Through his statement, “I noticed Julian staring at me out of the corner of his eye. This is something I see people do a lot with me. They think I don’t know they’re staring, but I can tell from the way their heads are tilted” (Palacio 37), August highlights the attitude society has towards individuals with impairments. Conflicting opinions and behaviour shared can induce confusion in young adults and this could result in them questioning their abilities and existence.

August on his first day of school was “. . . so nervous that the butterflies in my stomach were more like pigeons flying around my insides. Mom and Dad were probably a little nervous, too, but they acted all excited for me, taking pictures of me and Via before we left the house since it was Via’s first day of school too” (Palacio 46). His parents were so proud of him for the way in which he started handling situations. When kids stared at him, August pretended that he did not notice them. At school everyone denied to sit next to August and when the teacher directed one of his classmates Henry to take his seat, he placed his backpack on the desk building a wall between himself and August. He was not much bothered by Henry’s attitude towards him as he by the time had gone through such rough situations. But August used to question himself “Why do I have to be so ugly. . .” (Palacio 77).

When a child is treated with difference at school, “They fear and avoid things that have been associated with aversive experiences, but like and seek those that have had pleasant associations” (Bandura 58-59). Painful experiences can activate the anxiety and fear resting in their unconscious mind. Such incidents can also make an individual turn defensive or aggressive. Vicarious situations can also debilitate the performance of a child at school or home. Rather than trying to extinguish one’s anxiety, not to induce any by the society is a right strategy to be implemented. During Halloween, August decided to dress up in his favourite costume of Boba Fett. He was immensely excited as this was the only day where he could walk straight without bending down his face as the mask would cover his wounds. But his happiness faded as he overheard how his classmates called him by different names such as “Rat boy. Freak. Monster. Freddy Krueger. E.T. Gross-out. Lizard face. Mutant” (Palacio 98). This painful realization regarding how others viewed him made August to feel that he would never go to school again. What caused him more pain was seeing his best friend Jack Will mocking him along with his classmates. Such negative attitudes may impede an individual’s development psychologically. This could possibly diminish his/her interest in socializing and could result in self isolation.

Complexities faced by children might affect their identity as well as future. August’s only solace was his sister Olivia to whom he shared his inner frustrations and though she tried to pacify him, one question raised by August made her go speechless. August stated “Do people go out of their way to avoid touching you Via?” (Palacio 143). They shared a moment of silence as she was not able to answer his question. Judgments passed based on appearance should be eradicated as it could hurt one’s feelings and confidence. An individual’s competence should not be evaluated based on physical impairments. Each child is different and depressive statements give rise to feelings of worthlessness and discouragement. Perplexed thoughts about self, resulted due to environmental and social influences should be debated and the society is supposed to be held responsible for snatching away from them their beautiful childhood.

Though August had to undergo many harsh criticisms and experiences, he decided that nothing would affect him by any means. Palacio in *Wonder* depicts the harassment and segregation experienced by children

with physical impairments. August shifted his thoughts from being concerned about his face; to people who are genuinely happy to be around with him. The concluding words of August Pullman is “Everyone in the world should get a standing ovation at least once in their life because we all overcome the world” (Palacio 365). Every individual may undergo through problems at some point in their life and their success relies on how they overcome such predicaments. One should try to train their mind to overcome fears without letting their peace affected by fear or anxiety.

“Self-motivation through self-reactive influences, wherein individuals observe their own behaviour, set goals, and reinforce their performances, is a major factor in a variety of motivational phenomena” (Bandura 162). August from being a shy boy with low self-esteem transformed into a tough person and achieved the standing ovation he yearned for from his schoolmates for being kind. Limited freedom and shallow experiences can curtail one’s dream resulting in unwanted fears. A transition can be made possible by providing equal access to opportunities as well as the practice of inclusion. Improving the quality of education by expanding the curriculum with proper information regarding disability can educate young readers with the hardships suffered by other children around them. Physical impairment is not a subject to be neglected, neither are the individuals who endure them. The paper suggests on taking measure that could eradicate the negative implications marked upon individuals with impairments. It aims to establish the concept of respecting diversity by emphasizing the rights of children.

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# THE REJECTED BODY: A CRITICAL READING OF DISABILITY AND DIFFERENCE IN LEELA GOUR BROOME'S FLUTE IN THE FOREST

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**Abstract:** This study addresses the difficulties endured by the disabled community due to the social factors that discriminate them as different. Narratives on disability provide an understanding about the socially and culturally constructed tensions on body. The concept of disability incorporated in children's literature can have a significant impact on the child who reads it. Such stories resonate the hardships that the individuals with impairments face and the strategies practiced by them to overcome the abusive nature of the society in which they reside. Published in 2010, Leela Gour Broome's *Flute in the Forest* unravels the life of a thirteen-year old girl named Atiya Sardare who was afflicted by polio. Atiya's mother abandoned her while she learnt about her daughter's physical condition. She was neglected, rejected, and ridiculed by many for the impairment that affected her at the age of five. On the other hand, her father being a forest officer encouraged her to lead a life closely associating herself with the enchanting beauty of nature. Residing by the suburbs of a forest gave her the privileges to go on treks even without her father's knowledge. Atiya found solace and peace during her secret expeditions to the jungle as she was more comfortable with trees and wild animals around her, than the derogatory and mean comments which her classmates imposed upon her. The story reveals how a child had to escape into the depths of forest to avoid social interactions that devalued her existence. Disability Theory by Tobin Siebers is used as the theoretical framework to get an insight about the nature of disability experience in a sociological and psychological point of view. This paper attempts to offer a critical understanding about the experiences of disabled community and how society needs to provide them a better space to live with equal liberty and freedom.

**Index Terms** - Disability, abuse, mean comments, forest, solace

Representation about the hideous facts of disability in children's literature enlightens the young readers to raise questions about the concept of disability and the difficulties encountered by the physically impaired children. This prompts them to think about the idea of normalcy as they discover differences within their lives when compared to the fictional characters from the texts that they read. Details of disabled community when exemplified through novels, educates the young minds to inculcate in them practices of equality. *Flute in the Forest* (2010), written by Leela Gour Broome narrates about the experiences of Atiya, a thirteen-year old adventurous spirit who finds solace in nature as the social space was not willing to accept her because of her physical condition. She was afflicted by polio at the age of five and it was then she had to witness and experience the dark side of human nature. Disability Theory (2008), by Tobin Siebers highlights the complex behavioural patterns of exclusion imposed on the disabled community by the society. It can be considered as a psycho-social reading that acts as an eye opener to the readers to avoid the stereotypical practices that generates pain to the disabled community.

In the novel, Atiya was not aware of the consequences that she had to bear when she contracted polio. She was enjoying her vacation with her parents at Uttarakhand, while the family realised that their daughter was sick. She had to battle for her life for a month while the doctors did their best to save her. Atiya survived but the doctors mentioned to her parents that her leg would never be the same again. The doctors also instructed that she would need calipers to prevent her from falling down. Little did she know that her impairment had caused embarrassment to her mother. Sarojini, mother of Atiya was fond of dance but she had to drop her career in dancing when she married Ram Deva Sardare, Atiya's father. When Atiya was born, Sarojini wanted to make her daughter to be the best dancer in the world. Their house resounded with carnatic music followed by the rhythms of footsteps as the mother and daughter in unison practiced each dance movements. But by realising the fact that Atiya could never dance as she was affected with poliomyelitis, Sarojini's hopes and dreams were shattered. She soon left her daughter and husband as the stage and dancing called her back.



Disability theory aims at addressing such issues to the society as it might help to transform the rigid ideas and concepts that they have regarding disability. Siebers mentions that the disability community does not have the liberty to live without stereotypes due to the social injustices. To disown or disparage a person because of his/her physical condition is not a politically or socially correct attitude in this progressive, developing, and democratic society. Every parent might have dreams regarding their children's life and future even before they are born. The usual statement during the period of pregnancy is that the parents are not bothered about their child's gender as long as the baby is healthy. Parents of children with impairments gradually think that their children can be vulnerable and tend to develop a complex that they will not be able to lead a life as other children. Here, Sarojini being a mother was forgetting the fact that Atiya could have had talents apart from dancing. Instead of staying by her side and watching her grow, she abandoned her daughter when she realised that Atiya will not be able to fulfil her desires.

As quoted by Siebers "Disability marks the last frontier of unquestioned inferiority because the preference for able-bodiedness makes it extremely difficult to embrace disabled people and to recognize their unnecessary and violent exclusion from society" (6). Sarojini found it difficult to embrace her own daughter as she was dejected by the fact that her daughter's body can no more function normally. Facing oppression from one's own home because of a physical condition that they have acquired suddenly is a source of injustice that indicates the lack of humanitarian qualities in human beings. Atiya had a childhood where she did not gain the love of her mother and she was also broken as her physical condition had separated her from Sarojini. At a very young age Atiya had learnt to fend for herself and she decided to utilise her time bonding with nature. Being a daughter of the Range Forest Officer, she had access to the nearby forest which was occupied by wild animals and tribal communities. Atiya was not afraid of these wild animals as she had been well educated with the secrets of forest and its inhabitants by her father. She found happiness spending her time amidst nature as she felt it is the safest parameter of interaction.

Atiya enjoyed her freedom among the enchanted beauty of forest as the social space where she resides was not willing to consider her as equal. She decided to follow the principles of her aunt who advised her "'Life,' she had once told Atiya, 'is full of "events". You can either spend your time with a woe-begone face, resenting and regretting the sad and bad things that happen, or you can live through each "happening", thinking only of the positive and move on quickly to the next" (Broome 35). Rejecting social spaces because of marginalisation as followed by Atiya reflects the pain that a physically impaired person undergoes due to the restrictions that he/she has to face while he/she is marked as different. Apart from the abandonment and rejection faced within the family, Atiya was also exposed to many unpleasant experiences from her classmates because of her physical state. As articulated by Siebers, social exclusion is a reality that needs to be eradicated as it depicts the lack of access that a physically impaired individual has to his/her basic fundamental rights in the contemporary scenario.

Receiving appropriate support and attention from his/her loved ones will motivate an individual to tackle and surpass the troubles that he/she is undergoing. It brightens their life because of the confidence level attained from such actions of care. Prejudices and differences exist in all circles of human existence. Separating individuals based on their caste, creed, impairments, social, or economical status prevails all across the globe. A change to normalise all such actions is an inevitable criterion. A novel that depicts the incongruous actions reigning over humanity is an initiative that earnestly desires for a modification in the current political system. As mentioned by Siebers spreading awareness can initiate transformation to bring social justice that adheres to the basic needs of the disabled community. Such actions can limit the stereotypical notions and conflicts imposed on individuals with impairments by the mainstream society. Psychological fears are a result of the unjustifiable injustices levied upon them. Such sufferings jeopardise their confidence to act without worries in their future endeavours. Hence, proper attention should be given to the individuals with impairments as it enhances their resilience to stay strong and survive through the adversities that life offers them.

Atiya took her lessons from a nearby village school. Most of the children were very boisterous and they found happiness in making fun of Atiya by referring her as 'slow' and 'dim'. She found her school to be extremely monotonous as she was a regular victim to her classmates.

Their idea of fun was often to push and shove each other in the veranda outside their classroom. Atiya fell many times. The kids would watch her floundering away trying to grasp the furniture in her attempts at retrieving it from behind or under a distant desk. She soon became the butt of all their jokes. Because her reactions were much slower than theirs, they called her slow and dumb. (Broome 9)

Though such references were made, in reality Atiya was ahead of them in class as she always excelled in science and geography. She had a natural talent in learning these subjects as while her father bring his friends home; their conversations were based on their expeditions all over India. This will also be followed by projecting slides of captured pictures after they have their dinner. But the horrifying experiences that she had to deal with due to the adverse behavioural patterns of her classmates pushed her to flee away from the social space, to the jungle where she was free from hatred or discrimination. She decided to disconnect from society to reconnect with nature as, for her, forest was the symbol of peace. "She was more comfortable with trees and wild animals around her, than with scores of loud, yelling, teasing children" (Broome 3). Atiya enjoyed the tranquillity of the environment and it also helped her to have strong will power. Though she felt her strength drained in such expeditions, each journey revitalized her.

A good living environment provided by the members at school could have helped Atiya to gain self-assurance without searching for alternate sources of help. Having a good and reliable friend, teacher, relatives, or parents will help an individual to grow out from their fears and insecurities. Good interactions that accept an individual the way how he/she is serves as an important factor for the successful development of that person. A change can be seen if children are enlightened with informations regarding the minority groups that the mainstream society has excluded according to their convenience. Such brutal exclusionary behavioural attitudes can be avoided among the future generations if proper guidance and knowledge is provided to all equally. If the school curriculum is designed by raising issues and providing the details about the disabled community, it too



can be the catalyst to bring changes in the existing rules. Children are mostly unaware about many issues that are happening across the nation. Providing awareness about such contents helps them to realise the seriousness of a particular issue and act accordingly without being a reason of pain to another individual. They can rather bring about changes that will be of help to improve the living condition of their peers. Initiatives like this will eradicate the sufferings that children like Atiya had to endure at a very young age. A better tomorrow can be created by actions of justice that are taught to the children at their right age.

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