

## *Chapter IV*

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### Indian Perspectives of Disability

Treading through the terrains of disabled experience in Indian context foreshadows the importance of rethinking the situation of individuals with physical impairments. The social responses towards disability existing in the contemporary milieu should be a subject for analysis to understand the hardships that has affected the lives of many. The pain experienced by the physically impaired individuals draws attention to the social denial that blocks their way to the possibility of gaining their basic human rights. Disability is universal, holding no barriers of time, space, gender, age, financial or social status, and the geographical location; a total of twenty-one million people residing in India are affected by some kind of impairment. This indicates an estimate of 2.1 percent people among the whole Indian population is suffering to a physical condition that they acquire by birth, accident, or medical condition.

Among the five types of disabilities on which data has been collected, disability in seeing (48.5 per cent) emerges as the top category. Others in sequence are: disability in movement (27.9 per cent), mental disability (10.3 per cent), disability in speech (7.5 per cent), and disability in hearing (5.8 per cent). (Ghai 20)

Disability is a deep-rooted subject in India that has taken its space in mythology, scriptures, hymns, movies, art forms etcetera. Analysing an individual based on his/her culture, behaviour, attitude, and the values followed paves way for understanding humanity in a better way. The experiences of physically impaired individuals residing in different regions of India needs a parallel reading based on the

historical and cultural background of an individual. Culture significantly influences the upbringing of an individual and analysing people in the context of their culture helps the readers to envisage the brutal realities intensified due to the unnecessary social intervention. Emphasizing their troubles through literary texts draws attention to the horrifying reality they live in. It helps in spreading awareness about the issues and discrimination concerning the lives of individuals with impairments within India. A study on disability aims to enlighten the readers on how people who are designated as 'disabled' are treated in a way that diminishes their psychological, economical, and physical well-being.

Anita Ghai in her work *Rethinking Disability in India* has analysed the presence of disability in mythology as it provides information about the understanding of disability from the ancient times. The two great epics of ancient India, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* have references of disability. Depiction of disability changes with the passage of time. Some consider characters with impairments as subjects of pity and charity and there are also representations of the disabled as personifications of evil, villainy, and treachery. Ghai narrates about myths that consider disability as a deficit of body and mind, symbol of evil, or a state to be feared through the characters of Dhritarashtra and Gandhari from the *Mahabharata* and Manthara from the *Ramayana*. According to her, 'disability as a deficit' (Ghai 61) is picturised through the character Dhritarashtra, the older prince of the Kuru dynasty as he was deprived from being crowned as the King, because he was visually impaired. A note of empathy is depicted when Gandhari, wife of Dhritarashtra, blindfolds herself to experience the life as her husband does. In the *Ramayana*, disability is associated with 'evil' behaviour when Manthara, who is introduced as

Queen Kaikeyi's mentally unsound maid with a hunchback, successfully influences the Queen against the King Dasharatha and Rama.

Ghai has also mentioned the concept of disability as punishment through the story of Ekalavya in the *Mahabharata*. He is a tribal youth who aspired to become an archer under the guidance of Guru Dronacharya who refused to accept Ekalavya as his pupil because he belonged to a low caste. Ekalavya decided to learn the art of archery secretly by worshipping the clay idol of Dronacharya which he had made. Few days later, Dronacharya and Arjuna found a dog whose mouth was filled with arrows because of which it could no longer bark. They noticed, there was not a single drop of blood nor any wound. They were curious to know about the archer and found Ekalavya practicing with his bow and arrow. While questioned about his teacher, Ekalavya told him the truth behind his achievement. Dronacharya was bothered about the fact that he could be a competitor to his favourite disciple Arjuna and as a result to which he asked for his fees, the 'Guru-dakshina' (Ghai 67) which was a customary practice during those times. He asked for Ekalavya's right thumb as it could end his archery skills. Ekalavya happily fulfilled his teacher's wish by presenting his thumb to Dronacharya. This incident depicts how disability is being used as a method for depriving the skills that an individual possesses. "It is quite clear that disability is a cultural construct which is based on a sense of 'perfection' or 'societal norm' that has been constructed from religion, scriptures, mythology, folk tales, and metaphors" (Ghai 68). If the society deconstructs these symbols, the social and cultural meaning of disability can be deciphered.

While understanding disability in the present scenario, it is often noticed that the families who have members with impairments experience negativity due to the unjust social attitudes. Material deprivation due to financial instability, lack of

employment opportunities, hesitation in accepting individuals with impairments, considering their medical condition as a punishment, usage of derogatory terminologies, restrictions in inclusive education, architectural barriers that restrain them from getting access into buildings and vehicles are few among the challenges faced by them while leading a crucial life. “It is unfortunate that such systems have been organized that the disabled person faces a hostile environment designed for an ‘able-bodied’ society makes the questioning of a disabling environment a primary concern” (Ghai 234). Every individual should be treated equal but some people judge and discriminate others unfairly.

Records prove that “It was only in the 49<sup>th</sup> year of Independence that the first legislation advocating equal rights for disabled people became a living reality” (Ghai xvi). The United Nations observe the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December as International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Under the leadership of Javed Abidi, an Indian Activist, individuals with impairments from various disability groups joined their hands to form Disabled Rights Group (DRG) which is India’s first platform that advocates for their rights in the year 1993. Javed Abidi has also served as the director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP). The group envisioned a society where individuals with impairments can lead their life in a dignified manner with economical independence. Guaranteed education, employment, and accessibility were their prime motives that in turn could help the physically impaired individuals to have an independent and empowered life.

In the year 1995, the Government of India passed the Indian Legislation entitled as Persons with Disabilities Act. It encapsulates a framework that demands equal opportunities and protection with full justice to the individuals with physical impairments. Dealing with marginalisation or discrimination in the name of disability

needs a source to address their lived experience as physically impaired. In recent years, various organisations and institutions have come forward to take initiatives on providing the needed, by recognising the thoughts and emotions of the individuals with physical or mental impairments. Appearance of the subject in literary texts also provides an extensive critical view about disability, followed by the crisis endured by them.

In the year 2001, the Government of India made a reservation that three percentage of their fund will be allocated for the Rural Development Project for rural accessibility. The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (Global Jubilee Rural Self-Employment Scheme) has initiated a rule that six public places in each village should be made as barrier-free; this includes the primary health care centre, educational institutions, bus terminus, public rest rooms, and access to government related organisations. Though India has witnessed certain disability rights campaigns, Javed Abidi is recognised as the most prominent figure who introduced self-help groups which was led by individuals with impairments themselves with an aim of transforming the existing norms and regulations that consider them as the 'other'. They aim to secure a strong position where the disability movement in India will be recognised by all as a problem that needs attention and solution. They are waiting for a social change that would put an end to their vulnerable situations.

Ideologies of Anita Ghai from her book *Rethinking Disability in India* is used for conducting the research that traces the experiences of physically impaired people in Indian context. Published in 2015, the book is a magnum opus that states disability demands equal opportunity by eradicating the prevailing corruption based on social prejudice. The book primarily provides an autobiographical note sharing Ghai's experiences about her physical impairments. Her life proves that she never fails to move forward forsaking her difficulties. Ghai's painful journey begins with polio

which was later followed by breast cancer, stroke, and surgeries in heart. Growing up in a society where disability is pictured as a difficulty which is to be silently endured by the victim and their family members, Ghai decided to voice out their crisis that includes exclusion, poverty, lack of inclusion in educational sectors, oppression, architectural imbalances, and much more.

A concise account of Ghai's personal experiences conveys her ideas on why rethinking the concepts of disability in India is a much needed phenomenon. Ghai states,

For me, the goal of academic discourse in disability is to address epistemological questions that reframe disability. Historically, the intelligentsia as well the community has not questioned the 'naturalness' of conveying inferior and defective personhood to individuals with such physical and cognitive impairments. (xv)

Ghai demands for an explanation to the conservative societal attitudes that has affected her life along with the individuals who are physically impaired. She highlights the social inequities that are responsible for the various inconveniences caused to the individuals with physically impairments. Her findings explore and analyses the social, cultural, and political ideologies connected to the concept of disability. She expresses her concern on how certain social approaches remain irresolvable due to social negligence. Ghai felt intrigued when, "Sports shoes are to be worn 'normally' to play a cricket game (or sports, in general); however, canes, wheelchairs and braces are unique 'mobility aids', rather than just being 'normal'" (xviii-xix). She defies that certain labels and statements observe disability as not a normal phenomenon. Synonymous usage of terminologies such as disabled,

handicapped, crippled, questions the naturalness linked with disability. The World Health Organization (WHO) along with other global influencers has initiated significant strategies to bring changes in terminologies that address disability negatively. This replaced the existing derogatory labels by introducing the terms mentally impaired, physically impaired, visually impaired etcetera. To put these into practice, the complete participation and support of the society is essential. Further, Ghai mentions about the lack of facilities that makes their life even more difficult.

For instance, there is a single televised sign-language news bulletin per week for people with hearing impairments. The range of accessible reading materials for people with vision impairments also is extremely limited. The non-availability of other assistive technology devices such as electrically powered wheelchairs, at affordable prices, adds to the miseries experienced by disabled people. (Ghai xvii)

Implementation of PWD Act started in 1997 when the disability rights activist Javed Abidi, voiced his concerns by filing a complaint against the Indian Airlines and Union of India for inaccessibility in air transportation. In the year 2001, when Professor Stephen Hawking visited India, he expressed his desire to visit the historical monuments such as, the Taj Mahal, Humayun's tomb, Red Fort, Jantar Mandar, and Qutub Minar. He later realised the fact that these places are not wheelchair friendly and decided to write a letter to the then Honorary Director of NCPEDP, Javed Abidi, who later passed this information to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Though temporary wooden ramps were installed at all the four monuments, Hawking had to return without visiting the Taj Mahal. This inspired the tourism minister, Ananth Kumar to make all the world heritage sights of India, accessible to everyone. But it was only in the year 2016, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with



Disabilities along with ASI, decided to convert the fifty prominent monuments in India as barrier-free.

Structural inequalities restrain the successful developmental pattern of an individual. A person with impairment often becomes disabled due to the social imbalances that he/she has to live with. According to Ghai, “For example, a person in a wheelchair is not always disabled but only when he or she is unable to climb stairs” (xxii). Such barriers can be resolved if the architecture follows a universal design where staircases are replaced with ramps or elevators that can be used irrespective of one’s physical condition. Disability studies resolutely establish the idea of acceptance and equality by celebrating differences. Each individual should be motivated to rejoice in their survival when they overcome a repressive stage. Lack of proper support and inspiration can saturate the possibilities of transformation. Spreading normalcy in all spheres and aspects should be discussed and practiced. She states that disability is often considered as a problem that needs cure. Rather than considering fate or destiny as the epitome of disability, an emphasis towards the destruction of dominant constructions should be incorporated for them to have a normal life.

Ghai voices her concern on the lack of theoretical considerations about the issues faced by individuals with impairments residing in India. Though there are abundant findings and approaches regarding the same in the west, the distressing realities happening in India deserve attention and recognition. Tobin Siebers, Tom Shakespeare, and Marian Corker are few among the eminent writers who have emphasized the sufferings of the disabled community in general. Ghai wanted to introduce the same in India, where disability and their difficulties must be a part of academic discourses. “As an active participant in disability advocacy, my initial objective was and continues to raise awareness about the experiential terrain of

disabled people so that the hegemony of the 'able' could be challenged and contested" (Ghai 221). Hence, her findings explicate the sufferings and oppression that the disabled community experience along with the lack of liberation to be an equal participant of the society.

The main idea is presented in the book *Rethinking Disability in India* as a chapter entitled "Conversations about Disability: The Cultural Landscape". It is a comprehensive study dealing with the paradoxical thoughts about disability in India. Ghai encloses the significance of culture and shared beliefs that reflect an unavoidable criterion in human behaviour and development. But to examine disability based on culture is bound to be difficult in a multicultural country like India. "Cultural expectations always reflect systems of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts used by the members of a society to cope with their world and one another" (Ghai 22). The learned beliefs and culture are then gradually passed over to the next generations. Attention given to the cultural background of a written text provides access to the actual context and meanings of disabled experience. Ghai also communicates about the concept of 'karma' (26), which means the life of an individual is based upon his/her deeds. Disability is associated with karma in certain religious beliefs which states that impairments endured by an individual are the result of his/her past transgression or sin. It is also viewed as a consequence for disrespecting one's ancestors. Ghai mentions,

To understand how a culture deals with disability it is important to raise questions such as what are the connotations attached to disability in our culture or what are the most significant issues of discussions of disability in society and how is the status of disability ascertained in culture. (25)

Different categories and variations in physical and mental impairments can be witnessed across the globe and the meanings attached to their condition may differ based on place, space, and time. This chapter unveils narratives of disability by emphasizing the positive and corruptive side about the same in the Indian context.

One fascinating cultural approach expressed by Ghai in terms of Indian belief and disability is the '*Notion of Agency/Resistance*'. This concept is visible and well scrutinised by authors in the selected texts for analysis. It explores the perpetual attempts and dominant practices that the parents take part in to find a source to cure their child's condition. "In India, most parents tend to resist disability by responding to multiple ways of cure" (Ghai 32). She mentions that parents often rely on various practices such as magic, witchcraft, sorcery, consulting various healers, and offering prayers to the Almighty. "Such healers included *tantrik, Sufi, gunia, ojha, siyana, bhopa, jankar*, both in rural as well as urban India" (Ghai 35). The parents are willing to take any measure that advertises relief put forward by relatives and friends. The family members aim at providing the children with impairments, a good life that can help him/her to function better. Vigorous attempts to find the magical elixir often ends in failure. The desperate hope for survival by the parents is taken advantage of by the parties who commercialise their pain for monetary gain.

Depiction of resistance is clearly evident in the opening passages of *Trying to Grow* by Firdaus Kanga. The novel begins by portraying Brit accompanied by his father travelling in a bus to meet Wagh Baba, a renowned healer of their time who was believed to cure diseases. On their journey his father gets involved in a conversation with his fellow passenger, an old man, who enquires about their destination. His father states, "I'm taking him to a holy man, Wagh Baba. Maybe he'll cure my son" (Kanga 3). He is considered by many as a man who could do

miracles to cure severe medical conditions. The old man disapproved of such initiatives and asks him to pray to God to shower mercies on the child. He even warns him to be careful while dealing with such people. It is the immense desire of his parents to see Brit walk and lead a normal life that motivated them to take part in such activities. He also responds to the old man by stating, ““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 can get”” (Kanga 4).

Ghai mentions, “In my understanding, the mother’s ambivalence is exacerbated and prolonged as dealing with children with disabilities is painful. A society guided by normative hegemony places higher demands on mothers even as it traumatizes and dismantles the support system on which they rely” (34). Trauma resulting from societal interference is a silent toleration of pain endured by the family. In most cases, advices and suggestions often confuse the parents from specifically selecting the right choice. They rigorously strive to follow a divine inspiration to find progress in their prime motive towards healing. The belief in miraculous healing pushes them to involve in activities that advertises promising results. Parents often forget to confirm its authenticity as their primary concern is to find anything that could possibly cure their child’s condition. Ghai’s understanding suggests that each culture has a system that associates cure with magical spells that extracts the evil spirits that cause sickness in an individual. She states that some believe in sorcery, evil eye, and witchcraft to be the reasons for a child to be born with impairments. Sorcery is associated with magical spells that uses occult forces or evil spirits to create unnatural effects in the world.

Ghai mentions that religious-mystical cults are strikingly more apparent in India rather than in western countries. Surrounded by many attendees, Wagh Baba

was seated on a tiger skin to bless his followers. After giving the blessings, he also recommended the medication that he claimed would help Brit to overcome his condition.

‘Now Wagh Baba will write instruction.’ She handed him a large peepul leaf and quill. I couldn’t believe people still wrote on leaves: that was something I read about in *Tales from the Panchatantra*. Wagh Baba threw down the leaf on his chest, exhausted from the effort. Sam picked it up. The handwriting was remarkably like mine. It said: ‘Appli warm salt on legses.’ (Kanga 6)

When they reached home, Sam followed his prescription and applied salt all over the knees of Brit. He constantly monitored his son with strong determination and trust to find any progress and later meets Wagh Baba once more. During this visit Sam wanted to know about the payment that he owed Baba. His assistant quickly pointed towards a poor woman, “A bent old woman, hair askew, came into the room and dropped a handful of coins at Wagh Baba’s feet. The assistant quickly scooped them into her lap and began counting. ‘See!’ she said. ‘This poor woman has brought twenty rupees. So much faith in Baba!’” (Kanga 14). Sam with no second thought offered a hundred rupee note to Baba and later regretted for not giving him more. Though such visits and practices paid no benefits, the Kotwal family continued their search to find the finest medication for curing brittle bones. Sincere attempts and silent yearning to attain their goal was done with tireless efforts.

One evening the Kotwal family happened to watch the news associated with Wagh Baba in the ‘*Evening News of India*’ (Kanga 23). Wagh Baba along with his associates were arrested based on the charges of cheating and fraud accompanied by other offensive assaults. There was a raid by the police in his centre, based on the

complaints received from parents whose daughters were sexually assaulted in the name of treatment. Other truths behind the scenes were also revealed by the investigating officers. Baba had used many tricks to extract money from his believers and patients. His assistants would send in their servants to shower Baba with money, so that the potential rich clients would offer him more seeing this act of worship. Earning through quackery often affects the economically backward families who spend their savings with great belief for a healthy recovery.

Though there were no records to prove the miraculous deeds practiced by him; evidences of people from all walks of life that have been to his centre to receive blessings represent the deep-rooted belief in magic practices in India. Wagh Baba is just one among the magical practitioners introduced by Kanga. Ghai mentions that different waves of communication interconnected with culture can introduce new assumptions and belief systems. Suggestions received regarding healing a disease or condition is most often acquired from kith and kin. It is perhaps their ideas which are later put into practice. Sam had once attempted to feed Brit with powdered pearls following a suggestion made by one of his colleagues. But later that month, Brit had broken two of his ribs. They followed these procedures even when reliable evidence regarding its results were unavailable. Ghai believes their aim was to find some result to fight disability.

Kanga also introduces a mysterious medical consultant who calls herself to be the 'Breathing Generator', who stated that she had a magical ability to pass electrical current from her body to the patient and also claims to have proven wonders among soldiers who were wounded. "For two months the Breathing Generator came and stripped me naked. She rubbed her hands until they were hot with the friction and laid them on my spine, my feet, my neck, my thighs" (Kanga 35). This did not last long as

the interpretation made by the 'Breathing Generator' has proven wrong in the case of Brit. The next attempt introduced was a conventional method that involves chanting various hymns to fulfil one's wish or desire. This idea was expressed by Jeroo, neighbour of Brit. "Jeroo's mantra became for me what a marrow transplant is to a leukaemia patient" (Kanga 114). His prayers were centred not only for his recovery but also for the well-being of his parents and sister.

Ghai also mentions, "My understanding is that once the parents have accepted the defeat and consequent resignation from cure, they initiate a sense of agency by taking interpretive charge" (32). Aforementioned are the various supernatural belief systems followed by the Kotwal family to find a cure that could heal Brit. Culture reflects and transports ideas from one generation to the other. Persistent beliefs and acknowledgment of such practices still prevail in different regions of India. The families made several attempts to succeed in their mission to heal the affected without losing hope and faith. Meanwhile, healing scams tend to mislead the lives of many with promising results and Ghai out of her personal experience never trusted these practices.

*Family Life* by Akhil Sharma specifically quotes the urge of Mishra family practicing harmoniously to find the best cure that will enable Birju to enjoy his life again. Prayers were offered after the incident that damaged Birju's brain when he accidentally hit his head while diving. Ajay, brother of Birju states, "I had never prayed like this before, every day, hour after hour, praying till my throat became raw and even my tongue and gums hurt. I had not believed in God till then" (Sharma 47). Ajay considered his altar to be a microphone that enables him to communicate his messages to God. The family later relocates to Metuchen because it gave them easy access to temples. Ghai states, "Every culture has developed a system of medicine,

which stand an enduring and shared relationship to the existing worldview. The medical behaviour of individuals and groups is understandable discretely from common cultural history” (34). Certain beliefs and practices that have its roots linked with culture and society helps them to move forward in life with hope.

History also provides ample examples to prove the healing belief system of society that seeks cure from different and unreliable sources. The social scenario of each age influences the people to select certain practices that are regarded as the alternative technique of cure methodology. The Mishra family was invited for various prayers and religious ceremonies where they were treated with respect for the sacrifices that they have made for their son. But Ajay was against certain concepts where, “A few men that visited said God had appeared to them in a dream and told them how to wake Birju. Others said that they had learned a cure from a saint in India” (Sharma 74). The concept of miracle workers and the divinity claimed in their practices is one major concept embedded in Sharma’s *Family Life*. Miracle workers started to appear regularly when Birju was brought home from the nursing home for convenience and safety.

The first to visit the family was Mr. Mehta who was a petroleum engineer by profession. He would kneel down and pray for fifteen minutes that was followed by massaging Birju’s arms or legs. Birju’s mother waited patiently for him to complete the task to find any difference. Mr. Mehta gave an assurance to the family, stating that he will save Birju. “Within a week of Mr. Mehta’s first visit, the phone in the kitchen rang regularly with people who wanted to come and watch him at work. Some of the people who visited we knew. Others were strangers. They stood in Birju’s room and watched the cure like tourists visiting a temple to see an exorcism” (Sharma 117).



After few visits, it was fairly visible that Mr. Mehta could not bring Birju back to his old self and instead of admitting his helplessness, he abruptly stopped visiting.

The family also experienced repulsive attitudes from their visitors. The next miracle healer introduced by Sharma was from Kashmir who promised to cure Birju and unfortunately this did not last long. After a few days an elderly man started visiting them and tried a different technique to wake Birju.

This man's cure involved sitting by my brother and reading facts about him from a yellow legal pad. He would sit behind Birju's head and rest his hands on Birju's temples. This was to allow healing powers to flow from his body into my brother's. "My name is Birju Mishra. I was born on October 7, 1968. My favourite hobby is making model airplanes. My ambition is to be a surgeon. My best friend is Himanshu. I got into the Bronx High School of Science." (Sharma 121)

All these rituals gradually ended having no progress or results. The family also had to manage the financial expenses that were needed for the magical healing sessions. Apart from this, Birju's mother was expecting to find a positive change after each session. Along with these practices, people often visited the family to seek blessings from Birju's parents. Sharma states, "It is common among Indians to look at someone who is suffering and sacrificing and think that that person is noble and holy". (131) Ghai shares her views mentioning that in India, such practices are visible among both rural and working class individuals. Miracle workers through their healing practices claim to transport an energy from them that is supposed to heal the child or an individual who is suffering from impairment. Various shades of healing practices appeared in different regions of India. Kanga and Sharma are few among other

authors who have taken excerpts from real life to their fiction pointing out the situation of the families of physically impaired. Ghai's writings are also based on her personal experiences which made her to be a part of various healing sessions. She claims,

I am sceptical about such forms of cure as my own experience has taught me not to trust such healing practices. However, I am not ignoring the fact that in a society like India's, folk healing will be really helpful if we manage to establish a connection between folk traditions and methodical medical systems. (37)

Ghai has noted the influence of culture that interprets how connected disability is to the roots of Indian traditional customs and practices. In the constantly changing environment, the future generations should deviate from the existing ideologies that represent domination, supremacy, or authoritative approach that subjugates the other.

All cosmopolitan areas have both physically and mentally disabled people, including people with leprosy, amputations, visual impairments, mobility impairments, hearing impairment, people who are intellectually impaired/disabled, head injuries, people with asthma, diabetes, heart disease and arthritis, people with AIDS, psychiatric illness, cerebral palsy, and so much more. (Ghai 26)

There are further more sub divisions that categorise disability but cultural beliefs often links it with the concept of punishment or challenge that has affected the lives of many. Accepting information from wrong sources often affects the individual with impairments as it is they who have to undergo the practices of superstitions. Ghai as a child had to experience the taste of magical healings which her parents believed

would give her a cure. Such rituals promise an ontological transformation to the individuals who experienced any kinds of difficulties.

*'Notion of Agency/Resistance'* by Ghai can thus be regarded as an evidence of real experience to showcase the abnormalities associated with the term disability and the various beliefs practiced in the name of cure. Certain belief systems in India including witchcraft, magical spell, or sorcery still prevail because of the utmost desire that one has, to see their loved one's healthy and happy. This serves as the primary motivation for them to get engaged into strange practices that sells cure. According to Ghai, this concept foregrounds the traditional and modern perception of cure in association with disability that is practiced in India. The concept of resisting disability through magical healers or miracle workers also exposes the complexities and lived experiences of people with impairments.

The next concern initiated by Ghai is the synonymous exclusion experienced by individuals in different phases of their life. An extensive study detailing the financial instability, sufferings faced in educational institutions and employment sectors, issues with sexuality is covered in detail by Ghai under the heading, "At the Periphery: Marginalized Disabled Lives". The prime focus projects the struggles faced by families as a result of the poverty they experience. Monitoring their situation helps one understand their helplessness and lack of adequate social benefits. "While poverty does not respect caste, gender, rural– urban boundaries, its impact is most severe on people who live with disabilities" (Ghai 102). She undoubtedly remarks about the poor economic conditions of the disabled community within the Indian context. Poverty sets limitations for an individual to gain access to their basic amenities. People below the poverty line, have to manage expenses for the health accessories and medical charges of their loved ones who are physically or mentally

impaired and this brings in a feeling of hopelessness. They feel completely broken and find it difficult to survive as they lack financial security.

The families have to battle to cope with the needs that demands financial attention. The major obstacles are the lack of materials which includes medicines and other facilities that could make their life run efficiently. Poverty affects the quality of one's life by restraining their growth and development. Ghai also mentions that it is surprising to note that the majority of the disabled community reside in developed countries and yet they are deprived of their basic rights. "If research indicates that 20 per cent of the world's poorest people are disabled, one cannot help but wonder whether one causes the other. . . It is evident the relationship between poverty and disability is complex and multi-directional" (Ghai 103). Lack of financial assistance affects their lifestyle, health, and education as everything is interdependent upon one another.

Crossing financial barriers is next to impossibility as certain families are trapped in miserable living environments. Meeting with an accident or unexpected health conditions can worsen such situations. Sharma in *Family Life* has in particular, narrated the irrevocably locked in situation of a family who had to face certain unexpected incidents. The accident that placed Birju in a coma state shattered the stability of the Mishra family.

Recently, the hospital had told us that Birju needed to be moved, that now that his condition was stable, he needed to be put in a nursing home. The problem was that the insurance company was saying it wouldn't pay for a nursing home and so over the last few weeks, my mother had been getting into screaming matches with the hospital administrators who wanted us to leave.

(Sharma 54)

Acute dilemmas shrouded the parents as they spent most of their time in arguments. Birju's father started to consume alcohol as he considered himself a failure due to his incapability to take good care of the family matters. The stability of the entire family was broken along with their dreams and ambitions. Financial instability and its consequences is a universally seen criterion and its similarities are discussed by many activists unanimously. Ghai mentions,

As the most vulnerable and least vocal members of any society, disabled people are over-represented among the poorest people. The vast minority that make up the disabled, frequently live in dismal conditions, owing to the presence of physical and social barriers, which prevent their integration and full participation in larger community life. (102)

There is no relief for the unavoidable medical expenses that were hard to manage and cross over. Birju's brother Ajay decided to control his expenses and felt ashamed when his parents spent for him during the family's time of financial crisis. What added to their burden was the lack of proper care provided to Birju at the nursing home. Following an idea to change him into a new space, the family started enquiring about budget friendly nursing homes that could accommodate him. Everyone was distressed in their journey towards finding a good and safe atmosphere for their Birju. "THE WORST THING about our new life with Birju was worrying about money" (Sharma 127). The Mishra family later decided to buy a new house that could facilitate all the needs that Birju required. Decision to hire a full-time nursing assistant was followed by publishing advertisements in local newspapers for finding someone appropriate for the position.

“My father loved drinking. Later he would tell me that drinking was freedom, peace of mind, that he felt like he was surrounded by problems and when he drank, it was as if the alcohol plucked him out from among them” (Sharma 176). Birju’s father found complete solace in consuming alcohol to compensate for his inability in taking proper care of his family. This led to endless arguments that found no solution. His mother tried her best to save the family from embarrassment and she also feared that her husband would lose his job. The happiness of the entire family was fading away slowly due to the unexpected painful incidents that were levied upon them by fate. Disability is a common phenomenon that affects around fifteen to twenty per cent of a country’s overall population and the lack of proper health care needs spreads limits to their daily needs. Unhygienic living space and lack of nutritious food exposes the ordeal connected with disability and poverty.

Ghai has analysed such situations and states, “With the loss of economic power comes a drop in social status, a lack of confidence, low self-esteem, feelings of subjection and increased defencelessness and the reality of discrimination” (105). She intends to specify their hardships to survive in developing countries that provide less privileges and resources. The issues of the physically impaired individuals are left as an invisible subject that receives less recognition or attention. Proper information regarding the healthcare facilities should be provided to the people to bring in awareness about their rights. Ghai reminds about the disabled activists who proclaims that to alleviate poverty, the existing social notions regarding disability needs reconsideration. At times, the families to which the individuals with physical impairments belong deserve emotional and financial support and assuring them safety could provide a better living condition.

*A Time to Dance* by Padma Venkatraman has keenly observed and projected the concerns and crisis that a family has to manage, while dealing with certain unexpected financial expenses. Attention should be given not only to the present medical charges but also for the future expenses that includes education and health simultaneously. The accident that led to the amputation of leg, affected the life of young Veda who aspired to be a renowned dancer. The trauma of accident and its aftermath was filled with worries and queries regarding her ability to dance again. After few days of uncertainties and confusion, Dr. Murali who was in charge of treating Veda introduced Mr. James to the family.

“We’re lucky,” Dr. Murali says, “to have, working with us,

Mr. James, from America,

who is collaborating with an Indian research team

to create cost-effective modern prostheses.

He’s agreed to help with your rehabilitation

*and* with the fitting and making of your prosthesis . . .”

He suggests I’m lucky, too, to be part of the project,

because my family doesn’t have enough insurance. (Venkatraman 53)

Living a life among unfamiliar circumstances is filled with doubts and Veda until her accident was not aware of the prosthetic leg. The only prayer that Veda had was to have an artificial limb that could give her another chance to dance. The accident made her enter into a new stage of life which was not something anyone in her family had expected. A deviation from the regularities of life along with many

barriers had placed the family in a crucial situation. Mr. James pacified Veda by sharing his travel experiences that helped him develop an interest in creating a prosthetic limb. She was thankful to Mr. James for initiating such a project that gave her family a relief from some of their financial burdens. A child surviving such unexpected loss needs careful care and attention. Ghai mentions that poverty or lack of monetary benefits is one major factor that creates tension in individuals who have physical impairments.

Life cannot be the same after an accident that has taken away a part of one's body. Adjustments and changes should be inculcated in their daily routine to lead a smooth life. When Veda was ready to go to school after a break, the family was worried about her transportation. Though she had been using public vehicle for going to school since the age of ten, her father insisted to escort her after the accident.

He worries

drivers won't stop long enough

for me to get safely in and out.

He wonders if we should arrange a taxi.

As if we can afford taxis on a daily basis. (Venkatraman 81)

It is the lack of proper public facilities to accommodate the needs of physically impaired individuals that forces the families to search for an alternate solution even among their financial restrictions. Individuals with impairments do not benefit equally from social privileges. People residing in developing nations also face certain troubles due to the lack of resources provided to them. In the days following the accident, Veda noted that her mother was not wearing her favourite diamond earring which was



the only inheritance she had got from her family. When enquired about the missing earring, her mother said, “Dr. Murali said Jim’s project would subsidize the cost, / not cover everything” (Venkatraman 166).

Thus, in a trans-humanist model, disabled people can opt to be fixed not only to a norm but also to be enhanced and improved (for example, giving bionic legs to amputees, which work better than the ‘normal’ biological legs). . . . Even if we were to accept it as a desirable change the truth is that only a handful of disabled people will be able to afford such technologies. (Ghai 109)

Veda had not thought about the medical expenses until she found about what her mother had done for her. Ghai claims, only two among the eighty percent of individuals residing in Asia receive proper resources that could help them live a normal life. “A vicious cycle links disability and chronic poverty: if you are poor you are more likely to be disabled, and if you are disabled you are more likely to be poor” (Ghai 103). Twenty percent of individuals who belong to the economically weaker stratum are likely to have both physical and mental impairments. Managing unexpected medical expenses along with education, clothing, and transportation are unbearable charges while considering these families who struggle to tackle their food and shelter needs on a daily basis. Necessary actions and strategies should be taken to eradicate the cause and rise of poverty.

Venkatraman and Sharma have projected the helpless situation a family is put into as a result to the unexpected chain of events that occurred in their life. The benefits they receive are insufficient to fulfil and balance their basic needs. The families often struggle to find sources that could manage their expensive medical bills though a complete recovery or cure cannot be expected. Initiatives to empower and

save them from their shackles should be considered to improve their living conditions.

Ghai states, “While the disabled people’s organizations and their allies have campaigned to get disability onto the development/ poverty agenda, real inclusion can only be achieved when they are not considered as deficient and lacking”(110).

Beneficial needs can be satisfied only by the practice of inclusion strategy from the society’s side. Dominant realities can be changed only by altering the existing ideologies associated with the term ‘disability’.

The third concern raised by Ghai is the issues faced by individuals with impairments in the field of education within the Indian context. Unaccepted diversities and the concept of ‘othering’ (Ghai 112) or segregating is a commonly seen notion in educational institutions. To show an indifferent attitude towards children with impairments at the school level can lead to social isolation. Usage of marginalised metaphors that includes terms such as special, different, handicapped, and so on are few among the critically and widely used terms to address them. Accommodating differences and treating all fellow beings as equal should be practiced everywhere irrespective of their gender, class, caste, or geographical locations. Progression through education leads to inclusion where the society learns to understand and accept the idea of disability and the sufferings related to it.

Inclusive education with a flexible curriculum and welcoming atmosphere should be made available to each child who wishes to follow his or her dreams. This also provides them the experience of quality education with equal recognition. While practicing inclusive education, the institutions must adhere to provide the appropriate support which also includes an architectural barrier-free campus. In fact, education is a fundamental right that should reach all children equally. Proper education can gift them more opportunities to lead their life in a dignified manner independently.

Inclusive education can be regarded as a transformative process where all children are treated equal by enhancing acceptance through the eradication of marginalisation. For a better understanding of the policies that support free education, Ghai mentions the Persons with Disabilities Act (PWD Act).

According to the Act, the central and state governments and local authorities are legally bound to provide access to free education to all the disabled children till the age of 18 years within integrated school settings. The Act envisages a comprehensive education scheme to provide transport facilities, remove architectural barriers, supply free books, uniforms and other materials, grant scholarships, restructure curriculum and modify the examination system for the benefit of children with special needs. (113)

Zainab Sulaiman, being a special educator in her novel *Simply Nanju* reflects a realistic image of the internal conflicts experienced by children with impairments at educational institutions. Normalising hegemony can be witnessed while closely observing the behavioural patterns of certain staff members. Inappropriate and hostile attitude shared by them scares the children to honestly convey their problems. As part of the spinal cord issues faced by Nanju, he could not control or sense his bowel movements which lead to soiling his own pants unknowingly. This condition invoked a sense of fear in him as he, along with his classmates who have certain health conditions are not treated properly at school. The non-teaching staff are easily provoked and they reflect their contempt and disgust while taking care of these children.

Though in India, various movements and organisations function to provide inclusive and equal education, not every child gets the privilege to be a part of it. Each

working day at school for children like Nanju projects the inequalities they suffer in the name of their medical condition. Leading a fearful life can create a feeling of insecurity and doubt in a growing child. When children of Nanju's age are busy playing games, he is trying to finish his secret mission successfully by hiding his soiled pants without getting caught by the school maids.

Nanju bounded off to the toilet as fast as he could, to retrieve his plastic packet before anyone else got to it. He breathed easier when he found it where he had left it, tucked away under the stone bench. He closed the door of the stall and tied the neck of the plastic bag into a clumsy knot and stuffed it deep into his schoolbag. (Sulaiman 10)

According to the dress code of the school in which Nanju is studying, all the students were supposed to wear socks but there are children who cannot wear them due to their physical conditions. Here, Armaan is a wheelchair user who could not wear socks or shoes because of his feet which is bent inwards. He grew accustomed to being pulled up by the class prefect once in a while for not following the uniform codes. Reconsidering such policies and rules is important to make a child feel that he/she is given equal participation and involvement. As mentioned in the Persons with Disability Act, students with special needs were permitted to work with a flexible syllabus that holds different levels of difficulty. Armaan followed a simple version of syllabus from the rest of his classmates and was also exempted from writing examinations. The intention of such initiatives is to create an atmosphere where children from various backgrounds can group together and enjoy the privileges of education and togetherness.

The Government of India has taken an initiative to form a National Trust in the year 1999, taking into consideration the importance of social participation and equal opportunities. The trust tries to empower individuals with different types of impairments to live independently without confusion or regret. Educational institutions should also try to offer therapy sessions for the children with limited motor skills as everyone may not be able to afford it. Nanju and his friends were given therapy sessions at their school based on their respective physical conditions. “Nanju enjoyed doing the exercises that were meant to strengthen his muscles and improve his coordination. He cheered up at the thought of heading out into the sunshine for a half-hour of much-needed respite” (Sulaiman 37). Such steps can be a solace to the parents by sparing them from the additional financial barriers. It is a necessity that the educational sectors should incorporate the essential factors that helps in the overall development of a child.

In 1968, Kothari Commission was formed to recognize the potential needs in education sector that should be made available to the children with impairments in India. The report recommended social justice by way of making available the benefits that they deserve for a better life. Rather than forming a body based on humanitarian grounds, the report suggested making education an undeniable right to every child.

The later policies beginning from National Policy on Education 1968 recommended that, ‘Education facilities for the physically and mentally handicapped children should be expanded and attempts should be made to develop integrated programmes enabling the handicapped children to study in regular schools’” (Ghai 114-115).

The policy was later modified in the year 1992 that claims to consider children with physical and mental impairments to be given education among the general community for their growth and development. Ghai also analyses certain drawbacks of inclusive education of the Kothari Commission report. Even though the report specifically highlights the benefits that a child with impairment will get in an ordinary school, many find it difficult and psychologically disturbing to get along well with other children in such institutions.

In the year 1982, UNESCO, Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC), Ministry of Social Welfare, and few other organisations under the Department of Education implemented a new scheme where children with impairments studying in regular schools should be given free education along with necessary allowances that offer them with books, transportation charges, and other necessary equipments. The scheme demanded removal of architectural barriers for the children to get easy access to their classrooms and other areas independently without any assistance. It also specifically mentions to cover the allowances that are needed to appoint and train special education teachers. Unless and until the society is ready to accept everyone equally, these developments are not going to be fruitful. A flexible education system should be made available for children with impairments according to their requirements. Developments will be visible only if the society considers their education as a responsibility rather than a project.

In *A Time to Dance*, Venkatraman specifies the psychological trauma undergone by Veda after the accident while stepping into her school with an artificial limb. A not so welcoming atmosphere invoked a sense of insecurity in her to further continue her studies in the same school. Veda was also disturbed to see other children including her friends walking and running around her. She even confessed to her friend Chandra stating,

“I hate seeing you walk, I say” (Venkatraman 76). Veda felt asymmetric while trying to balance over one leg and initial days at school were traumatizing due to her crutches. “I hate announcing my arrival on crutches / – stomp, clomp, stomp, clomp– / loud enough to make every head turn in my direction” (Venkatraman 84). She felt distracted and different due to her condition and it made her difficult to socialise as she was undergoing both physical and emotional pain.

Another issue highlighted by Venkatraman is how Veda was psychologically disturbed due to the usage of various terminologies. Referring to a child by his/her impairment is equal to making fun of one’s physical appearance. As Veda was studying in a regular school where she was the only student with a physical impairment, she was considered and treated differently from others. Few of her classmates while playing cricket noticed Veda and stated,

“Veda’s so sensitive!

Are we supposed to stop using certain words

because she’s handicapped?

Should we give cricket stumps

a new name now that she has a stump?” (Venkatraman 85)

Their laughter echoed through Veda’s mind and she found it extremely difficult to overcome the pain and humiliation which she had to suffer. She even decided to drop out of the school as these experiences enhanced her weakness while she was trying to forget them. The terms ‘disabled’ and ‘handicapped’ are few commonly used terms in the Indian scenario. These derogatory usages should be avoided as they are sources of unintentional marginalization. When children like Veda struggle to chase their

passion by overcoming hurdles, the society should be kind enough to accept their differences as normal. Ghai states, “However, ‘person with a disability’ has remained a preferred terminology within the formal structural system that work with people with disabilities and also within most advocacy and political organizations, at least in India” (84). The reason provided for this is while addressing an individual, one should concentrate to refer the person first and not the disability.

Veda’s self-worth was next questioned by her dance master Uday who doubted her ability to dance again, even though she pleaded him to take her back as his student. Veda provided him with examples of famous personalities like Sudha Chandran who became a successful dancer in India with the help of her Jaipur leg and what Veda is offered by her doctor is a prosthesis which is more flexible and supportive than that. Apart from declining her plea to accept her as his student, he even asked her to find a new dream or passion that is meant for disabled bodies. He stated,

“Veda, so many of us

blessed

with able bodies

can’t meet the demands

of a professional dancer’s life.

Maybe for you

it’s time

for a new dream.” (Venkatraman 118)



She further tried to prove her ability to dance again in front of him but unfortunately stumbled. The humiliation faced by her in front of the whole crowd was so embarrassing. But Veda took this as a challenge to prove to the world that she is equal and capable even in the absence of her one leg. “According to the NSSO (2002) figures, of the literate disabled population, only 9 per cent completed secondary and above education” (Ghai 121). Indian Government had introduced the National Education Policy, to include children with physical impairments to be a part of regular schools which could help them grow together by enhancing their courage and self-confidence. It is the socially constructed statements of mockery that stagnate them from growing further. In Veda’s situation these scornful comments and terminologies acted as the nutrients to her success as she decided to move on without lending ears to the contemptuous comments.

Brit from the novel *Trying to Grow* invested most of his time in home schooling. Madame Manekshaw was kind enough to offer him with free education as she knew that his parents could not handle his educational expenses. Later, Brit managed to get admission in Champion School, an institution run by priests who gave special consideration for physically impaired children. The family was relieved when the Principal announced, “I shall charge no fees” (Kanga 51). Brit was grateful to be a part of a system where he can learn new things but what disturbed him the most was the way he was viewed by the members at Champion. “It was my first Annual Prize Day and Father Ferra was giving his speech when I heard my name and froze in my cotton shorts” (Kanga 57). He found this as a consolation prize for having legs that do not work. Children like Brit do not yearn for special consideration and what they really need is to be treated equally without a shallow presence of pity or sympathy. Ghai’s findings articulate,

The philosophy behind inclusive schools is that all children have the right to be educated with their peers in regular classrooms in neighbourhood schools. The concept of 'inclusive education' advocates an intrinsic respect for difference thereby celebrating diversity rather than creating labels that delimit human potential. (Ghai 118)

Nanju, Veda, and Brit are representations of segregation offered by the educational institutions or the society in which they live in. Inclusive schooling can be successful if diversity is valued and treasured with importance. Educational institutions that fail to satisfy the needs of physically impaired children do not deserve recognition as the society must learn to accept all its inhabitants with equal importance and consideration. The school management is bound to provide its students with proper accessibility, curriculum, and required training for each child to receive proper education. Ghai also notes, "Simply removing barriers is not going to work unless social attitudes are changed and a disabled identity is acknowledged as a 'normal' part of the social order and the social psyche" (125). Turning one's impairment into a disability lies with the social power structure that delimits their growth as a successful individual.

The fourth concern highlighted by Ghai is the connection between disability and employment. It analyses the ratio of opportunity that an individual with impairment has while searching for a job. Employment is a necessity and a basic need from time immemorial. But individuals with impairments are often held at a periphery while trying to attain an employment. Lack of opportunities restricts their growth socially, politically, economically, and as the years go their sufferings tends to grow and multiply. "It was only when Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister, recognized disability as an important issue, that a legislation on Persons with Disabilities Act,

1995, was formulated” (Ghai 129). The stigma among the employers who doubted and restricted themselves from appointing individuals with impairments reveals unfair judgements and perspectives towards disability status. Such widespread and deep-rooted attitudes should be eradicated by putting efforts to explore the productive side of employment opportunities.

Kanga through the character Brit expressed the torments that an individual has to undergo because of his physical condition. His parents were concerned about his future in a world that they might not exist. Sera, his mother asked him to be a teacher or a lawyer that could give him earnings for a life so that he does not have to depend on others. His father mentions, “How on earth do you think he can go out and compete with all those young men bursting with energy!” (Kanga 93). This concept of denying the fact that individuals with impairments are capable enough to work is a commonly shared belief by the society. Brit found it so distressing when his parents openly proclaimed that they do not expect him to work or earn. He expressed his contempt by stating, ““Why don’t you expect me to earn? That’s unfair!”” (Kanga 145). Brit believed it was equal to saying that he had no reason to be alive.

Lack of employment, forces them to be financially dependent which makes them more vulnerable. Every individual should be provided with equal opportunities and nurturing to engage in a meaningful existence. Campaigns that promote awareness by supporting the community that have individuals with impairments could create a positive attitude among the general public. Appropriate training or schemes that promote self-employment even at school level can provide a wider scope for a good career. It is very rare to find individuals with impairments in a profession that could provide them with high income and security.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) conducted the research study 'Employability of Differently-abled Persons in Industries', in association with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII). The report indicates that a majority of the companies do not have a proper CSR policy. (Ghai 134-135)

CSR policy also referred as Corporate Social Responsibility is a scheme that aims to promote individuals from rural background by trying to eradicate their poverty, provide proper education, and improve their sanitation and health care facilities.

The whole community had to undergo many hurdles to prove to the world their worth and capability. Brit was able to establish his self-worth when his first novel got published. He felt that he is not alone anymore as he was able to communicate with thousands of people through his story. Publication of the book was a gesture of reply to the harsh comments that claimed Brit to be incapable of making an earning for living. Not all can have the courage to overcome the societal prejudices levied upon them under the title of disability. The sad reality is that employment opportunities are very few while compared to the growing population of individuals with impairments in India. Even if secured with a profession that provide them with social status and earning, the hurdles they have to surpass to attain their goal is highly challenging. Derogatory attitudes or perspectives that others have towards them create a psychological tension at their workplace.

In the novel *A Time to Dance*, Venkatraman highlights the social injustice which causes confusion in a dancing prodigy. Veda was devastated when her dance master denied admitting her back to his classes after the accident. Such instances project how the society tends to neglect the potential in a girl who aspires to pursue dancing as a profession. While Veda approaches him to continue her classes he states,

“You’ve lost your leg!” He shakes his head

as though I’ve lost my mind.

“Sir, haven’t you heard of Sudha Chandran?

She danced with an old-style Jaipur foot.

And I’m getting a far better prosthesis that hers. Soon.”

“Veda, we must be practical—” Uday anna’s reluctance

goads me on. (Venkatraman 115)

The physical trauma and the emotional strain experienced by the aspiring performers highlight the negligence of the society in recognising their talents. Veda had to struggle hard to finally achieve her aim to be a performer as well as a dance teacher. The readers can experience the ecstatic moment of Veda when she accomplished her mission of proving to the world that she is born to be a dancer despite the accident that tried to destroy her aim. Physically impaired individuals do not often find their impairments as a restriction to their goals; it is mostly the opinion of the spectators that assume and delimit their strengths and capabilities. Individuals with impairments strive hard to achieve dignity and acknowledgement through their productivity.

The term ‘disability’ should never stand as a criterion for discrimination or rejection in the field of employment. Individuals with physical impairments acquired by birth or accident do have their own passions and aspirations which have been curtailed by social intervention. The official environment should be set to the standards that can accommodate the needs of every citizen equally. It can raise self-confidence in individuals as their earnings provide them fulfilment. Feeling

independent is a wonderful experience when it is achieved through one's hard work and perseverance. Getting employed also makes them financially stable to organise and fulfil their basic needs.

Litigations such as the Sambhavana can counter with the ablest society.

However, to protect their right to employment of the disabled, new employment opportunities should be identified and created in formal and non-formal sectors, including the cooperatives and self-employment schemes” (Ghai 137-138).

The deep-rooted stigma of doubting the efficiency of the physically impaired individuals should be avoided. Sufficient and appropriate trainings can help them to find employment opportunities in a convenient manner. Initiatives to accept and support their growth with trust can lead them to settle in a suitable work atmosphere.

This chapter, “Indian Perspectives of Disability” tries to highlight the customs and practices seen among Indian community with special reference to disability. Though it details the legal possibilities and social influences that can bring positive changes to the existing condition, a considerate attitude by providing their right to live equally with dignity can be made practical only with the help of the society. Perpetuating and afflicting impairments as signs of sickness, inability, or weakness evaluate the condition as an obstacle that delimits an individual from successfully flourishing in any field. Questioning one's condition is equal to invasion of privacy and later having a sympathetic approach also points them as pathetic or vulnerable. Recently, academic fields and activists in India have introduced discourses that foreground their issues to socially accommodate and accept individuals with impairments.

“There has been a lot of evidence, which states that with undeniable clarity, that disabled people live lives blemished by discrimination and exclusion. The social structuring of disability by socio-economic status, gender, location show that disabled adults is likely to have low earnings or unemployed” (Ghai 234). The needs of the physically impaired individuals should be prioritised by spreading knowledge to the public which can bring possibilities of eradicating social exclusion. Following inclusion strategy in educational institutions, increase in employment opportunities, facilitating a barrier-free environment that helps them to easily access public buildings and vehicles, providing proper healthcare facilities are the basic necessities that they deserve to lead their life in a comfortable manner. Hence, the social constructions need a reformation to overcome the established notions of disability.