

## *Chapter V*

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## **Chapter V**

### **Narrative Constructions of Disability**

Narratology as a field of study attempts to provide an insight to the narrative structures employed by authors in a text. The study examines the variations, by which each author has a unique way of expressing or conveying his/her thoughts. It is an evaluative understanding on how a plot is presented by the author. A close reading of each text unfolds multiple layers of meanings and attempting to analyse a story based on the constructed plot unveils the artistic creativity of the writer. The chapter intends to address the meanings attached to disability while being represented in a narrative art. It highlights the techniques and strategies followed by the authors in the selected novels to understand how disability is perceived as a subject of concern in the contemporary scenario. Narratives on disability can be recognised as reflections of realities that individuals with impairments experience regularly. Novels are imaginative projections of truth that can convey serious and heinous issues to its readers.

The narrative system comprises various techniques and elements which on decoding provide an interpretive description of the text. This chapter focuses on the setting, plot, narrator, perspectives, styles, techniques, and characterisation used by the authors to make a narrative interesting and productive. The story, its contents, and the act of narration lay a strong foundation in this remarkable process. Disability being the fundamental topic of discussion renders a phenomenal experience to the readers and it also enables the authors to voice out the pain experienced by the physically impaired individuals who in reality is seeking for recognition and acceptance. These texts with appropriate examples could bring transformative

attitudes in the readers as they are enlightened about the concept of disability and seriousness of its negligence.

The study concentrates on how the works selected for analysis acts as a catalyst to showcase disability and the concerns of families that have members with impairments. *Simply Nanju* by Zainab Sulaiman is a strikingly important novel that has produced characters who are children to replicate the lives of physically impaired children and the hardships they experience from their educational institution at a very young age. Sulaiman has managed to express a large and complex idea in an approachable manner through her persuasive writing style. The setting, characters, and the conflict introduced by the author is expository as it shares information that are highly relevant but rarely discussed. The troublesome situations encountered by the characters are described in a relatable way where the readers can visualise and feel connected to their helplessness while handling a particular situation.

The setting or backdrop is an important element that brings the aspect of visualisation within a narrative. It is highly relevant as it enables the readers to have a personal involvement by imagining the location, scene, characters, and their actions. The plot of *Simply Nanju* revolves around the lives of a group of energetic children studying in a school which is designed for children with physical impairments. Most of the action happens in United Integrated School and at Vigneshwara Science and Technology Park, a place to where the children were taken on an excursion. The choice of setting as designed by Sulaiman is a simulated reality that could probably sharpen the intensity of the plot. It projects the struggles that Nanjegowda, commonly referred as Nanju, a student of standard five and his schoolmates undergo at different situations as well as locations. The short narrative through its magnificent setting has

portrayed the dysfunctional social structures that have denied equal opportunities to these children.

The plot begins with a backstory in which the detail of Nanju's physical condition is revealed. Being born with a defect in his spinal cord, he has to deal with issues of incontinence throughout his life. As the narration begins with accounts of the protagonist's health, the plot falls under the genre of disability studies. The book can be seen as an interesting verity that places its readers in a narrative hook. Usage of simple language is another prominent feature as it attracts young readers too. The author has used the plot as a channel to communicate the living realities of individuals with impairments. The novel weaves around these children who are victims of discrimination, bullying, teasing, and much more. The plot introduces children with fragile bodies but strong minds who work towards success with enthusiasm by not taking their weakness as a hindrance to their growth.

Sulaiman has introduced the concept of nested stories, a literary device to induce entertainment to her novel as she describes an investigation initiated by Nanju and his friends to find the notebooks that were disappearing from their classroom. These actions and incidents prove that these children might look different according to the social norms but they do share emotions, thoughts, and desires just like any other child of their age. The plot is carefully crafted in a way to project that none of these children are different as generally perceived by society. Sulaiman has subtly used colloquial language to bring authenticity as all the major characters that rule the plot are under the age of ten. The concept of disability is well projected through a simple but powerful narrative which makes the readers realise the differences these children experience along with the discriminative and stereotypical actions in this contemporary world.

The inevitable factor of each plot is its narrator. *Simply Nanju* is narrated from the third-person omniscient point of view as the story is narrated by someone who is not presented as a character. This is a traditional mode of narration which is commonly visible in many literary works. The story is written in past tense, following a linear narrative by placing the past events first to the current events that are happening in the lives of the central characters. The narrator has primarily given description of each character along with their physical condition before moving into the main plot. Details about the limitations experienced by Nanju, and his classmates, Mahesh, Ronit, Aradhana, Armaan, Pratik, and Zafar were provided in the beginning to hint the seriousness of the issue which is later revealed in the novel. The narration follows a subjective point of view as the readers can relate with the sufferings, thoughts, emotions, and feelings of each character.

Crafting a plot with creative use of imagery and techniques are followed by authors to trigger the reader's emotion. Here, Sulaiman has brought dramatic visualisation, imagery, and sensory detailing to evoke a mental impression of the narrative and to create awareness among the readers regarding disability. Each narratives passes information and *Simply Nanju* is based on Sulaiman's experience as a volunteer special school educator, and her writings shed light on her perceived knowledge about disability. To project and highlight the architectural barriers, the author has brought an image where the children who uses wheelchair had to be carried on shoulders as there were no ramps or facilities that could accommodate their needs. "Then the kids were walked, pushed and carried up a flight of stairs to the 'Museum' . ." (Sulaiman 53). Precise detailing on such factors has a huge impact as they expose the issues that need rectification in reality.

Apart from the vivid imagery that narrates Nanju's life and talents, the author has also put forward the difficulties that he endures due to incontinence. He was often caught by the maids while trying to hide his soiled shorts. Sulaiman's writing induces an olfactory imagery when the narrative explains about the unpleasant stench that fills in the air when Nanju tried hiding his shorts. Children whose physical conditions that are similar to Nanju are also made to wait in front of the comfort station and they end up soiling their shorts as they were not taken in on time. All these are elements of sign that has coherent significance in the present day. These detailing produces an image where the reader can visualise their struggles and helplessness. Narratological analysis emphasise on these features as they are evidences of reality. Individuals with impairments are often neglected from the mainstream society and are pleading for equality.

The focalisation factor is the image conceived by the author regarding disability and how it is perceived by the readers. Through proper characterisation, the novel exemplifies the lack of progress in the contemporary scenario of a developing nation. Characters represent reality as it resembles people and on the other hand, literature is written by, for, and about the people. *Simply Nanju* features direct and explicit characterisation as the novel is a fabricated reality and characters are created from Sulaiman's personal experience, memory, and imagination. When children including Nanju are ill-treated by their family members, school authorities as well as the officials at Vigneshwara Science and Technology Park, the readers can relate to and empathise with the living circumstances of individuals with impairments. Such realisations are results of character-effects. Here, they cannot find any difference between reality and the fabricated characters. When people try discriminating others as 'them' and 'us', narratives like *Simply Nanju* educates even the young readers to

look at the world on humanitarian grounds by making them realise that everyone are born equal and they deserve to be treated the same.

In the novel *A Time to Dance*, Padma Venkatraman has given careful descriptions about each setting to make the story more appealing. The novel is set in an apartment in Chennai, the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu. The central character Veda lives with her parents and grandmother. The novel begins by depicting the features of a dancing statue and sculptures that are carved on the granite walls of the temple. This gradually indicates the protagonist's passion towards dance. Later, the accident scene is pictured with vivid detailing as it had a life changing effect in Veda as well as her family. Veda's school and dancing institution is also given significance as these were the places where she had felt multiple emotions of pain, disgrace, and discrimination. The novel's most important moments takes place in these settings.

The plot holds records of events that are irreplaceable. Each action has its own peculiarity and every element is interconnected. Initially, Venkatraman mentions about Veda's desire towards dance and how her mother had opposed this decision. One of the peculiar features of the novel is the way in which it moves back and forth in time. Flashbacks are narrated by Veda's grandmother and the scenes frequently shift forward to the present action. This usually depicts the subjective experience of the character. The reflection of events from the past corroborates with the present. Veda often spends time reminiscing her past after the accident by wishing she could go back to those good old days. Realising the amputation, Veda's only fear was the loss of her ability to dance again. She started to connect everything that she hears with the music of dance. Elaborate description about the sounds she hears project her inner sufferings.

The plot describes the change of attitude in Veda's acquaintances after the accident. She also encountered rude questions from strangers regarding her physical condition. Veda was ridiculed by her classmates because of their ignorance regarding the subject. Venkatraman highlights the complexities of feelings that individuals with impairments undergo while trying to lead a normal life. According to social perspectives, individuals who have impairments are liable to answer the questions imposed on them by their family members, relatives, or even strangers. The novel tries to bring out these issues as people do not seem to respect the personal space of these individuals. Apart from all the rejections, Veda was able to uplift herself by challenging all the limits that tangled around her life and career. She practiced different dance postures using prosthesis through constant hard work until she was able to attain perfection. Veda decided not to quit out of fear which is not possible for everyone who suffers due to rejection.

The author's choice of narration is by a third-person limited omniscient narrator, who describes the life events of each character. The narrator mainly travels through the viewpoints of Veda and her family. The narrative style and techniques employed by the author have made the plot unique. Lyrical fiction is a remarkable style of writing that has narrations framed in musical patterns. Venkatraman has transcribed her thoughts into words and has followed a rhythmic structure throughout the novel. She had her inspiration of writing lyrical fiction from reading the young adult novels written in verse or vignettes such as Gary Paulsen's *Dogsong*, Patricia McCormick's *Sold*, Kimberley Newton Fusco's *Tending to Grace*, Carolyn Coman's *What Jamie Saw*, Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, and Karen Hesse's *Out of the Dust*.



The novel has an aesthetic objective where the narrator is trying to bring out the spiritual awakening or discovery experienced by Veda. The book brings the idea that everyone is equal and differences are to be understood, accepted, and celebrated. It is better to envision a future where inequity is eradicated and no one has to lament over their struggles. Venkatraman has organised all these elements in an exceptional manner by following a balanced approach. This is supported by sensory detailing where the readers can have a visual treat for their minds. Auditory, olfactory, and kinesthetic imageries are some of the techniques followed by Venkatraman. The imagery and instances are largely sentimental and the poetic nature followed makes it impossible for the readers to forget the traumatic realities penned by the author.

Auditory images are mainly based on onomatopoeia. The phonetically imitated sounds, noises, or music is articulated by Venkatraman as the protagonist aspired to become a dancer. While the temple priest wanted Veda to feel her heartbeat as it can be regarded as echoes of dance rhythm, the author has used terms like “*thom thom thom*” (Venkatraman 3) to indicate its intensity. Being a dancer, Veda constantly enjoyed certain rhythms that would make her heart beat to a brisk.

*tha ka tha ki ta*

*tha ka tha ki ta.*

A joy that makes

rhythmic music swirl in my ears. (Venkatraman 27)

Words like “*thaiya thai, thaiya thai, / one two, one two, / right foot, left foot, right foot, left foot*” (Venkatraman 31) are traces of sounds that is present in the novel to depict her dance classes with her tutor Uday. The plot allures readers to the world of

dance and they would enjoy bharatanatyam with the same devotion that Veda has towards dance. She senses music in everything such as the cutlery sound effects reverberated from the kitchen like “*krr-krr-krrk*” (41), the buzzing sounds of mosquitoes swarming outside her mosquito net, and the drizzling rhythms of rain during monsoon, but silence broke her when she was confined in the “gray-green hospital room” (42) after the accident. The readers can also visualise Veda running over her rough bandages after the amputation just like a child who cannot stop playing with his/her tongue when he/she loses a tooth. Few months since the accident, Veda was rejected by her dance master Uday, stating that she is not eligible to dance again. She was constantly persuaded with her grandmother’s motivation that brought a solution to this pain as she felt dejected after her teacher’s denial. She introduced Veda to Dr. Dhanam who was a doctorate in the field of classical dance and who never regarded disability or any impairment as a hindrance to become a dancer. Veda states, “For the first time since the accident, / I hear the faint echo of a dancing rhythm. / *Thaiya thai. Thaiya thai*” (Venkatraman 132).

Veda started to cope up with her anger by acting it aloud. She used this mechanism to vent her painful emotions. She was regularly kept at stake with situations that question her impairment and body. As she chose a public vehicle like bus as means of transportation to her school, there was a lady who regularly ridiculed and questioned her about her appearance/condition. This was a habitual experience for Veda until she decided to react against this odd situation. She replied with sarcasm that a crocodile had bitten off her right leg and she also showed the generosity to enact it. “Like this.” I thrust my face next to hers, open my mouth / and snap it shut. Crocodiles don’t growl, but I roar, “Grrrr” (Venkatraman 101). The hatred that Veda had towards her crutches is depicted through sounds like “stomp, clomp, stomp,

clomp” (Venkatraman 84), that the author has used to indicate her arrival and everyone especially her classmates would stare in the direction of the sound.

Venkatraman has also given importance to olfactory images. Veda’s first interaction with her grandmother is described through “. . . the spicy-sweet basil-and-aloe scent of her soap” (Venkatraman 7). The bond they share projects the unconditional love that exists between them. The grandmother is the only character who supported Veda in all her pain and happiness. She believed in Veda and inspired her to confidently move forward in life whenever she doubted her own ability. The grandmother knew what delighted Veda and often prepared the best meal she could ever have in her life. Quotations that describe the aroma of the cooked meal resonate throughout the novel. The most painful among the olfactory imageries was when Veda recounted about the unpleasant odour of vomit, blood, and burnt rubber which was the only memory that she recalled from the day of the horrible accident. This makes the readers anxious as they experience her agony.

Kinesthetic imageries are followed by the author as the novel is pertained to movements. Though there are instances where Veda’s capability to dance is emphasised with detailed attention, the most important incident is when she tried to dance in front of her dance master who after the accident never took an initiative to visit her. She wanted to prove to the entire class that she has risen from her fall and will be a better dancer than ever before. Unfortunately, when Veda tried to exhibit her skills lost her balance and tumbled forward as she tried doing the salutation with her prosthetic leg. She was humiliated by her dance tutor who then rejected her desire to dance with an artificial limb. But all these incidents never deterred Veda from continuing her practice. The novel ends where the readers sense the ecstatic joy in Veda as she dances by forgetting all her troubles.

I dance

dance

dance.

Beyond

movement

for one long movement:

shared

stillness. (Venkatraman 306)

The applause pierced the night and Veda was left in darkness where she recollected her past in a minute's time. It was a period when Veda realised that she was no longer under the influence of her past miseries. She had travelled so far that no pain could hurt her ever again. Dance was a powerful emotion to Veda as she considered it sacred. It also gave her hope and she was thankful because whatever she had gained in her life was because of dance.

The novel perpetuates the concept of difficulties that individuals with impairments deal with in their daily life. A story like *A Time to Dance* with the framework of simple family narrative and characterisation spreads awareness for the society to consider changing their stigmatic views and perceptions regarding disability. The central character Veda was not welcomed by her dance tutor and classmates after the accident. She experienced being the outsider who was excluded without mercy just because she had an artificial limb. There are times when Veda

openly declared her hatred of her physical appearance. Venkatraman has selected characters in a way where few were helpful and the rest were rude to Veda. The author brings the notion that if acceptance and inclusion are practiced by everyone equally, children like Veda will not feel different because of impairments. The novel is an emotional journey of Veda's experiences and a spiritual awakening when she accepts herself without embarrassment. She exuberates with confidence as she rises from her fall.

*Family Life* by Akhil Sharma is a consciously structured novel and he took more than twelve years to complete the book. It is based on Sharma's own experiences and he was able to cast off his pain through his writings. For Sharma, writing was a therapeutic experience and his book served as an instrument during his journey towards healing. When realities of disability are narrated by individuals with personal experience, they can delve deeply into the subject matter without making any false impressions. The plot is beautifully rendered and primarily describes the emigration of the Mishra family to New York and the shocking reality of their extended tragedy as the eldest son Birju met with an accident that resulted in his brain damage. The novel is mainly set in Mishra's residence and the nursing homes where Birju was often admitted due to his physical condition.

Third-person omniscient narration is followed as the narrator Ajay, brother of Birju can be regarded as the alter-ego of Sharma. The novel is written from a subjective point of view as the narrator was well aware about the emotions, feelings, and thoughts of all the major characters introduced in the novel. Sharma has used the flashback technique to a good effect as the narrator recounts his past and the tragic events that had altered the lives of the Mishra family. This reduces the tension in readers as it creates an idea that the characters might have overcome their struggles at

the point of narration. Instead of directly depicting disability, the plot begins by bringing instances where Birju was the smartest child in their family who was studious and ambitious. It was very difficult to accept the fact that, an energetic child like Birju was destined to stay paralysed in bed for the rest of his life. Apart from this, the stability of the family was shattered as they were broke emotionally and financially. Sharma also describes the toxicity that leads people to isolate families who have members with impairments.

To narrate the traumatic incidents of the past is stressful as the author has to relive once again all his downfalls and breakdowns. Though *Family Life* is a fictional work and not a memoir, the readers can relate to the distressing realities that the family had to undergo due to an accident that spanned for just three minutes. The narrator is often found questioning the God Almighty about what would their lives have been if those dreadful three minutes of accident had not occurred. The novel also depicts Ajay recalling his habit of communicating with God in Birju's absence.

IN THE MORNINGS I prayed, and at night, when I was supposed to be sleeping but couldn't, I spoke with God. One rainy night, the room was gray with light from the street and my mother was lying nearby, her breath whistling. I was on my strip of foam and I asked God whether he minded being prayed to only in need. "You think of your toe only when you stub it," he said.

"Still, it's better to pray just to pray."

"It's human nature. I don't mind it." God looked like Clark Kent. (Sharma 51)

The narration where Ajay communicates with God is designed effectively for the readers to understand the thoughts and ideas in his mind. According to Ajay's imagination, God resembled Clark Kent, a fictional character and the main protagonist of a television series. Ajay envisioned a better reality where his miseries and confusions would end. He wanted to escape from situations that had ruined his brother's life which eventually affected everyone in the family.

As the Mishra family was devoid of hope, they relied on supernatural and magical practitioners who claimed to bring back Birju's consciousness. Superstitious beliefs and presence of magical healers became a part of their lives even without their knowledge. They were forced to practice any source of medication that claimed to be a cure and were not bothered about their authenticity. They had a notion that they could try and fail than remaining stagnant. The influence and presence of such medical practices reflects the struggles endured by individuals who try to find a cure that might help their loved ones to have the benefit of leading a healthy life. No matter what, the Mishras wanted to safeguard Birju and were never willing to give up on him. The family knew that his recovery can be a difficult task but they believed it might stay impossible only if they refuse to search for treatments that can restore his health.

Sharma has used sensory detailing to evoke emotions in readers as they read. Following this pattern makes each scene imaginatively pleasant and agreeable. The narrative projects the transition period, from Mishras being a contented family who were preparing Birju for the entrance examination to get admission at Bronx High School of Science to their downfall where they became highly sceptical towards life. Description on the details that projects Birju lying on a bed with railings, wires, and tubes attached to him was an unpredictable reality that the family had to witness. The

visual impression of Ajay becoming frightened while Birju trying to yawn, cough, spit, and responding to noises by turning his head towards that direction shows the pain that this younger brother experiences while trying to comprehend and blend with their new reality, is well portrayed.

The scene that describes the setting at the hospital is projected as dark implying that the rooms were dim even when the ceiling lights were switched on. Parents of Birju are found walking through the corridors by doing the needed paperwork that might help them relieve from their financial constraints. The narrator has given details on how difficult it was for them to take care of Birju, especially when they have to shift him to a wheelchair for taking him out to get some fresh air or while cleaning him. The family has also found tears streaming down on Birju's face which made them realise that though he was not able to communicate, he was definitely suffering. Lack of medical assistance and negligence of duty by his nursing aide had often caused him pain. While feeding him wrong formulas, "He'd open his mouth as if to burp. The Isocal, white and smelling of medicine and without the vinegar of gastric juices, would gush out along with whatever medications he had been given, including his beclamide, which kept him from having convulsions" (Sharma 82). Such narrations indicate the unacceptable realities of disability experience.

Each time Ajay steps out of Birju's room, he experienced pain as he was leaving his brother alone. To see him lying helpless being unable to communicate his pain saddened Ajay. Sharma has depicted a visual imagery where Ajay imagined being a gangster who looked like Amitabh Bachchan, an Indian film actor to fight the nursing aides who failed to look after Birju with proper care. He wanted them to spend a whole night in Birju's room trembling with fear. Sharma brings out the fantasies in a child who is trying to cope up with his struggles through imaginative



thoughts. It was a necessary ingredient that helped Ajay to move forward in life at the times of distress. Being a child, he had to spend most of his time at the hospital where his parents were completely focused on his brother. He too was yearning for attention and the narrative describes how he depends on God, imagination, fantasy, and friends for solace.

Visual imageries of Ajay trying to gain attention through sympathy from his friends are well picturised by Sharma. He began with describing his brother's health condition and later on added stories of Birju being a special child with lot of talents. Ajay lied to his friends creatively through his imaginative skills. All his classmates were eager to know more about Birju. Ajay stated,

Birju, I said, had rescued a woman trapped in a burning car. Birju had had a great talent for music and a photographic memory.

Sometimes I didn't tell these lies, but only imagined them. I concocted an ideal brother. I took the fact that Birju had told our parents that I was being bullied and turned this into him being a karate expert who had protected me by beating up various boys. These fantasies felt real. They excited me. They made me love Birju and when I was in his room kiss his hands and cheeks.

(Sharma 96)

Ajay felt excited when everyone eagerly listened to his stories. He was also anxious and afraid of being caught by his friends. This worried him and he was exhausted to lie more about Birju's courageous deeds. At some point, Ajay's friends started to doubt him and gradually avoided him. Family issues that include sudden change in family dynamics, financial instability, lack of communication, or unsettled disputes

among parents usually upset children like Ajay and these factors have a significant impact on their developmental stages.

The novel deals with a sensitive subject that concerns disability, illness, and the coping strategies followed by a family. All the major characters are members of Mishra family and the plot demonstrates the oppression and suffering that the family had to deal with, due to an accident. It shed light on their devastated experiences along with social and medical negligence that added more pain to their existing troubles. Sharma enlightens his readers by focusing the attention on the physical, emotional, and financial stability that was shattered within a short span. The novel reflects the chaotic state that the family was placed in, as a result of certain past events. The narrator's sense of devastation and his recovery is balanced and presented with perfection. *Family Life* is an ideal representation of the author's emotions and writing his experiences as a fictional narrative was indeed a therapeutic act where he felt relieved by letting them out through his novel. Sharma's characters can be recognised as the fictional embodiment of realities who had to deal with many harsh and unpleasant experiences that had broken the peaceful existence of an entire family.

*Trying to Grow* is the fictional representation of Firdaus Kanga's own experiences of being born with osteogenesis imperfecta. The major portion of the plot is set in Bombay at the residence of Kotwal family and few other places where the central character Daryus travels. The protagonist is generally referred as Brit as he was born with brittle bones syndrome. The name was suggested by his sister Dolly and through this initiative the family was trying to normalise his physical condition without considering it as different. The plot runs through the eyes of Brit as the author has employed first-person narration. Kanga through the life story of Brit claims that disability does not impede one's growth and individuality unless the society interferes

and shares a difference of opinion. Divided into two parts, the novel shares his childhood experiences, developmental stages, and the act of growing out from his limitations.

Title drop also recognised as titular line is a method where the author tries to inculcate the main title of the novel in any line within the narrative. Kanga has employed this technique in the second part of his novel as it is entitled as 'TRYING TO GROW' which specifically exhibit Brit's development where he tries resisting and rejecting the biased attitudes that are held against individuals with impairments. The novel propagates the idea that children or adolescents are forced to cope with their physical changes, emotional anxieties, and social discrimination. Social influences that are negative often hinder their growth but Brit decided to battle against all such notions that were imposed on him by his family, friends, and society. Individuals with impairments deserve to live with equal dignity without pleading for the same. Brit was deprived of various rights like his desire to go out with his friends, gain a good occupation, and get married. His desires were never encouraged whenever he tried to seize an opportunity to express them. He was never able to achieve anything without struggling to attain it. Kanga through his novel exposes the deep-rooted stigma that is attached to disability within Indian society.

The author has used olfactory and visual images to describe the healing centre where Brit was taken by his father to find a cure to brittle bones.

The room we entered was sticky-hot and smelt of jasmine-scented joss-sticks. True to his name, Wagh Baba was stretched out on a tiger skin. He was stark naked. A woman in white with heavy coils of black hair falling over her sari was rubbing a perfumed ointment into his right thigh. (Kanga 5)

The author tries to project the illegal activities that are practiced by certain parties in the name of providing cure. It shows details of how these groups profit out of their medical practices and there are thousands of followers who approach them with great belief for finding a cure for their loved ones. Parents of Brit decided to take him to Baba with the same intention that he might heal their son's brittle bones.

Unfortunately, the family later came to know that the healing centre was a scam that had deceived lots of people.

Complications experienced by friends of Brit while carrying him around in his wheelchair is depicted to highlight the lack of infrastructural facilities that are prevalent in this contemporary scenario. Lives of individuals who use wheelchairs are highly difficult and pathetic to witness as they have to struggle a lot to reach their destination. Proper attention should be provided on such issues as they are often left unnoticed. Brit also needed assistance to reach objects that are placed out of his reach. The readers can visualise his agony as the author describes his helplessness,

For some funny reason, there were things in our flat that were kept out of my reach. I don't mean the family jewels or stuff like that—ordinary things like the earthenware pot in which we kept our boiled and filtered drinking water; it perched on a brass tripod about five feet tall. Or the set of encyclopaedias I loved dipping into; they stood red and gold on top of the polished brown bookcase. Or the Girard-Perregaux gold watch I'd inherited from old One-Oh-One that I loved to sport; it was tucked away in the top shelf-locker of Sam's cupboard. (Kanga 62)

Brit felt discomfort in depending on others for his personal needs even though his parents were willing to help him at any hour of need. He felt powerless during these

stages where he has to rely on other people. As the novel ends, Brit renovated his home where everything was arranged and set at knee-level. Though the procedure was expensive, he was satisfied with this modernised version of his personal living space.

Kanga's characterisation is rich with multidimensional viewpoints on disability. Brit's parents were very affectionate towards him. Even when the medical professionals hesitated to pleasantly announce his birth, his parents welcomed him wholeheartedly without any negative inhibitions. They decided not to treat him any different or special. The character, Madame Manekshaw was his home tutor who provided him affection, education, and valuable lessons of life. She uplifted Brit as he was downtrodden with grief while being subjugated at different stages of life. Through this character, Kanga has depicted the concept of how a teacher is supposed to treat his/her ward while they undergo anxiety or pressure. Brit's friendship with Amy and Cyrus was appreciable as he felt comfortable while being with them. Surrounded by supportive people who never judged him based on his physical appearance gave him a sense of security as others marked his medical condition as a reason for avoiding him.

The novel unfolds a series of episodes that establishes the concept of disability in the minds of readers. Brit wanted to associate with people but he was not willing to gain any relationship as a result of sympathy. He had openly declared his discontentment while he was treated with special care by his family, friends, and teachers. Brit never wanted to feel vulnerable as his family became over protective. The protagonist aims to establish his identity without depending on others and he wished to be recognised for his own achievements without the influence of other people. Kanga through the representation of his character Brit, speaks for the rights for individuals with physical impairments to lead a social life in a dignified manner.

The book shows that it is extremely difficult for them to come out of the shackles that society has laid for them. As the title suggests there are thousands of people who are trying to grow despite their physical conditions. Unfortunately not many have accomplished this goal of theirs. Only a change in the existing stigmatic and discriminative notions regarding disability can bring the needed difference so that the individuals with impairments can benefit out of it.

Representing the ideologies of the authors through a fiction demands good presentation of the topic for the readers to get inspired from their works. Employment of narrative techniques allows authors to organise their thoughts in a remarkable order. Each novel holds accounts of personal experience, fantasy, imagination, and creativity. This chapter has evaluated the representation of disability as chronicled in the selected novels for analysis. Each author has defined their concern regarding the differences that the society holds towards individuals with impairments. Physically impaired individuals have to strive hard to establish equality by resisting the stigmatic views and social negligence. In order to project this, the authors have taken instances from real life as well as imagination and have presented the perplexing challenges experienced by a group of people because of their medical or physical condition. Padma Venkatraman, Zainab Sulaiman, Akhil Sharma, and Firdaus Kanga have undoubtedly carried forth their message in an explicit manner for the readers to ruminate over the seriousness of the subject matter. Their writings not only entertain readers but also help people who are less familiar with disability, to understand the truth and difficulties experienced by individuals with physical impairments.