



Acceptance of Identity in Disability: A Study on Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*

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Abstract:

Disability studies mainly focus on individual's physical and mental issues. It also points out a normal person's view on disability. Many factors like stress, birth defect, and environment are reasons for disability. Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* displays the 1984 Bhopal disaster through the voice of nineteen year old disabled boy named Animal. He acquires this name because of his twisted spine which makes him to walk by four foot. Animal is one of the victims of that great disaster which erased his family members. This paper mainly focuses on the disability of Animal which makes him inferior in front of normal people. This inferiority makes him to hate his human identity and survives in a small circle with his animal identity. The main reason for denial of his identity is his false perspective of judging others. Elli Barber gives him a hope for a new life but he mistrusts her thinking that she is helping the American company. Sinha presents that Animal's fierce nature is because of his lost identity. Though he is cruel he shows kindness to people like Ma Franci. Loneliness troubles the life of Animal which makes him insecure. But everything takes a turn when he falls in hallucination where he undergoes pain in a jungle. It teaches his worth in the society. Sinha clearly portrays the tragic role of poverty in the life of Animal as well as the people in Khaufpur. Animal's wish to stand in two legs vanishes after realizing his identity that humanity is hidden in his beastly appearance which is his true self.

Keywords:

Disability, new identity, humanity

Disability studies concerns body as a core with subconscious psychic or materialistic incapability. This topic is kicking around from histories and is still argued today. The obstacles and dilemma faced by wrecked people are discussed and certain clarifications are brought out by many critics through literature. Literature has given platform to many motifs similarly it has also

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provided a stage to expose the agony of confined humans which is showcased through disability studies.

Indira Sinha is a British writer of Indian and English decent. His novel *Animal's People* is a simulation of a great incident that disturbed Bhopal in 1984 with a huge holocaust. Sinha's sympathetic voice for the affected people is not only echoed to the world by his works but also through his campaigns and interviews. This novel unveils the aftermath tragic happening and also points out the great scar left by a terrible hazard. Kamila Shamsie comments that "Sinha's writing is a blade gleaming in the moonlight. And the novel, for all its pain, is a work of profound humanity" (Shamsie). He won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2008 and also shortlisted for the 2007 Man Booker Prize for the 2007 Man Booker Prize for this effortful work.

Animal's People is set in Khaufpur, a land destructed by a poisonous gas where everyone still goes on cursing the culprits behind the American chemical company. The statements of Animal, protagonist of the novel reveals the drastic change in the life of Khaufpurians after that great incident. Many including Animal, Ma Franci, Kha-in-the-Jar, Somraj and many others are victims of this dreadful event. Animal's twisted spine is one of the main reasons for his forgotten identity. Every human wish to reflect his civilized self to his society but some circumstances compels them out pours their savage attitude to shun themselves from a difficult situation. Those people never even wish to recollect that fierce behaviour in their bad times. But Animal feels secured and comfortable with his beastly identity than his human self. He sets a barrier in his inner thought by saying that " 'I'm not a fucking human being, I've no wish to be one" (23) and hides his inner feeling with difficulty by using rude words to address other individual in his society.

Animal's deep involvement with the thought of inability makes him to seclude himself from the able community. This desolation must have made him to seek his own identity in an animal and also befriends a dog named Jara. The cooked-up personality creates a personality disorders within him and judges human as something superior which as something superior which gradually moves him to a corner. Jennifer Richel says that Sinha successfully finds the double identity amidst "human" as well as "nonhuman" and clarifies the statement of human rights. Rickel also states that Animal's dilemma where he forcefully accepts his external presence and

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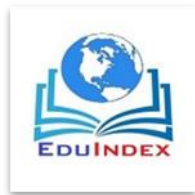
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secretly wish to walk by two foot “In my mad times when the voices were shouting inside my head I’d be filled with rage against all things that go or even stand on two legs” (2) which is explained by Sinha through the announcement of the arrival Elli Barber, an American doctor. The political affair ruining the life of the people travels in the backdrop along with the life of Animal.

The inner dependence of his beauty in physical self creates fear of the outside world and makes him to doubt normal human beings. The only thing which Animal accepts as his friend is Kha-in-the-Jar because it symbolically refers his own identity where invisible bound stands as the jar and Kha represents his own personality. The mortal inability builds loneliness annoys the psychic of the protagonist who compels him to get hold to some relation that urge his sexual desire but Nisha’s love for Zafar irritates him and he escapes to a forest where pain teaches him the real human identity hidden in his so called “beastly boy”. The low self esteem and envy vanishes with a sudden hallucination of new discovered human identity only when Animal accepts by his words “*I am Animal fierce and free in all the world is none like me*” (366). Everything settles down in a mean time for Animal along with the discovery of identity and finding new relatives. Thus inability enables Animal to explore a new self in the world of reality.

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