



## Think India (Quarterly Journal)

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ON

**DISABILITY, REPRESENTATION AND LITERATURE**

held on 03 October 2019 and Organised by P.G. & Research Department  
of English

S. T. HINDU COLLEGE, NAGERCOIL-2, Tamilnadu, India



Perspectives of a Differently Abled Man: A Peep into Vaibhav Kolhe's

*The Incomplete*

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### ABSTRACT

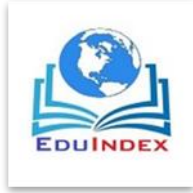
Disability studies provoke a clear and consistently thought provoking portrayal of differently abled people. Nowadays, people with disability face many problems in their day-to-day life. All people have their own dreams to achieve something special in this world. Likewise, the people with disabilities also have some dreams. The novel, *The Incomplete* by Vaibhav Kolhe deals with the difficulties and the challenges undergone by the protagonist in his life. The protagonist narrates several incidents from his childhood to his adolescence. He faces a lot of struggles in his life because of his physical disability. Even in his love, he fails because of expressing his inner emotions. This novel mainly depicts the fact that how the protagonist accepts his disability as a challenge and how he overcomes his weakness. The present paper focuses on the sufferings and reactions of a differently abled man and how he adapts to the environment and the people in the substandard society.

Key words: Sufferings, Struggles, Emotions, Environment, Physical disability, Challenges.

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Disability studies examine the barriers of people with disabilities. Impairment can be caused due to any of the intellectual ability, perceptual capacity, mental and physical development or sensory problem or a combination of all the problems. Disability studies not only focus on the physical and mental issues but also try to improve the views on disability, in the field of literature, history and culture. This study helps in developing and learning about disabilities from the experiences of different persons gained in different situations.

Vaibhav Kolhe is an Indian writer who belongs to the city of Kolhapur. Presently, he is working in a multinational company in Pune. The novel *The Incomplete* is his first work, released on 2 May 2017. It is a heart touching novel well written by Kolhe, based on his own personal experiences from which he finds a new



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meaning for disability. He loves listening to music and reading books especially on astrophysics during his free time. The novel mainly deals with the theme of love, courage, sufferings, emotions, eagerness and passion.

The paper highlights the sufferings undergone by the disabled in their life and the society's outlook towards them. This study is an attempt to help the disabled to attain their rights and equality in the society. In the essay, *Attitudes About People with Disability*, Benjamin Snow quoted disability as: "... natural. We must stop believing that disabilities keep a person from doing something, because that's not true.... Having a disability doesn't stop me from doing anything" (np).

Kolhe's *The Incomplete* is the story about a young man named Yash, who is disabled in his left hand and left leg from the age of eight. He undergoes various treatments during his childhood. He can't control his left side. As a differently challenged person, he faced a lot of difficulties in life. He used to put his hand in his pocket and limped his way to walk. Several incidents in the book denote the sufferings of the disabled. This study also focuses on the people with disabilities and the problems faced by them in the society. It tries to bring out the relationship between the disabled and the society which represents the life of those people. The author witnesses the painful experience of the protagonist, "My childhood was the most painful part of my life.... A lot of students would always making fun of me, mimicking my limping and my shaky left hand (67).

In this world, there are a number of people with several disabilities. The societal attitudes and disgrace play an important role in restricting the opportunities of disabled for full participation in social and economic life, frequently with their own families. Even though Kolhe was a meritorious student, he was discriminated by the people of this prejudiced society. He seeks money from his parents for his daily expenses. He felt ashamed of it. So he tries a job by his side. Luckily, he is selected and gets a placement in Mumbai at MNC. After completing the training, he was placed in Java Project. There he was unable to type using his left hand. Because of his disability, he was not able to take food along with his teammates at the party. So he avoids that. It clearly portrays the alienated mind-set of the protagonist.



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People with disabilities face a lot of struggles in the society like depression, isolation and loneliness. They are avoided by their own friends and family due to their impairment. Even though, they have a lot of abilities, they are treated as inferior to the abled in the society. They are differentiated and discriminated by the people. *The Theory of Critical disability* says “Critical disability theory centres disability as it compares liberalism norms and values with their actualization in the daily life of the disabled people” (np). According to the norms of the government, the disabled people have some facilities. They also have equal rights and freedom. But people don’t allow them to utilize such things. If they are allowed to utilize those norms, it can improve the status of disabled. Here the protagonist, Yash came by bus to his office. There was someone who sat on the seat which was allotted for the handicapped persons. But he does not like to ask the seat. From this one can see how the people in the society gave something to the disabled and also take the same.

The society considers people with disability as a sect of marginalised group. The parents of Yash, tried to find a perfect partner for his life. In his hometown, they saw a girl for the protagonist. He doesn’t like this but there is no other way, he accepts for the proceedings. The relatives of the girl’s house asked him to walk as a trial. He walked nervously. Repeatedly they asked him to walk several times. He was very much disappointed of this. The author substantially points out the oppression of the disabled in this sub-standard society. Mostly disabled are avoided by others and this hurts them a lot. Everyone in the world have some thoughts, happiness and emotions. The disabled are not exceptional from such kind of disrespect.

The protagonist was such a distinct personality who never seeks help from anyone. Rushali, the resource manager of his office introduces a girl to the testing team. It is none other than Reena. At the very first sight, Yash was attracted by her. Day by day their friendship extends. Finally, he decided to express his love but he didn’t have enough courage to face Reena. So he conveyed his love to her through a SMS. He expressed his inner emotions as: “...things that have been changing since I met you one fine day. I had been always feeling ashamed of my disability but now I am trying to do my best with my abilities” (106). He expressed his love with bravery; normally he was not looked for such intense feeling. His love was eternal towards



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Reena. But she doesn't accept his love and moved to Delhi. The pain undergone by the protagonist and the tears were intolerable. The author vividly portrays the struggle of disabled and how they overcome the circumstances through the central character Yash.

Ultimately, Kolhe ends the novel by giving the positive note by expressing the beauty of life and says:

In life, if you can't change something, then you have to accept it and find joy in it. Life doesn't give us all abilities as we come into it, but it always gives us opportunities to find our abilities. I got more opportunities than the average person. (113)

The people in the society should also try to accept the incompleteness of the disabled and should boost their confidence by providing them opportunities to exhibit their abilities. Here, Kolhe states disability as "Having negative attitude or disbelief in our own abilities is disability" (103). Thus, the protagonist changes his mind and feels that the disability is not his own fault. He walks freely, never keeps his hand inside his pocket. He never feels ashamed of his disability. He started doing his own work and doesn't think about others opinion and he feels proud of his disability.

From this study, the readers come to know about the circumstances of the differently challenged and the apathetic indifference showed by the people towards them. It is high time for the differently abled to seek recognition among the abled and try to avoid being alienated by them in all the aspects of life.

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