

Think India (Quarterly Journal)

ISSN: 0971-1260 Vol-22, Special Issue-05

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR

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



Achiever of Impossible Things: A Study of Persons with Disabilities

Dr.M.Rashmi

Asst.Prof.of English

Arignar Anna College

Aralvaimozhi

Affiliated to M.S.University,Tvl.

Abstract

Disability studies is an academic discipline that examines the meaning, nature and consequences of disability. This field focuses on the impairment of an individual's mind or body but disability is considered as a social construct. The present paper discusses 'Achiever of Impossible Things: A Study of Persons with Disabilities'.

Key Words

Disability studies, impairment, social construct, feminism, feminist.

Simone de Beauvoir (1905-1986), a socialist turned feminist, has developed her concept of women which is based on the fundamental theory of existentialism. Her book *The Second Sex* itself has become the kind of slogan. Simone considers that since time immemorial women have been suffering from the sense of inferiority, whose cause does not lie deep in the anatomical differences, but it lies deep in our culture which assimilates social and biological facts, and treats women as one who possesses the second sex. It also assigns her the status of other. In this society:

She is simply what man decrees; thus she is called 'the sex', by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as sexual being. For him she is sex-absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other (16).

Simone de Beauvoir takes the concept of second sex in the radical way. She considers that women have been represented as 'second' have been represented as second rate citizens in legalized sex in which men have been classified as the first sex. The second sex that which firmly believes in deconstruction is essential. It wants to deconstruct all the approved taboos and ethics of the society. In the book *Garden of Eve*, Poornam Srivastava expresses:



Think India (Quarterly Journal)

ISSN: 0971-1260 Vol-22, Special Issue-05

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR

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



She herself puts forward as example of the second sex. She has challenged the norms of the society when she decides to live her life with Sartre without marriage. She calls her fellow women to come forward to deconstruct the taboos of the society which make them inferior. (46)

At present, women try to deconstruct all the established canons of the society which imposes male on her. In *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir shows that new woman aims:

. . .to be active, a taker, and refuses the passivity man means to, impose on her. The 'modern' woman accepts masculine values. She prides herself on thinking, taking action, working, creating, on the same terms as men; instead of seeking to disparage them, she declares herself their equal. (727)

Simone's concept of woman has a universal appeal. From this we came to know the characters of women and also this paper highlights the great deeds of Sarah Tucker and Helen Keller.

Disability studies is an academic discipline that examines the meaning, nature and consequences of disability. This field focuses on the impairment of an individual's mind or body but disability is considered as a social construct.

In the article, "82 Inclusive Matters" published in *The Hindu* expresses, "India has 2.68 crore people living with disabilities according to the 2011 census." (41). In India, the Rights of Person with Disabilities Act, 2016 guarantees equal rights to all persons with disabilities in India and places the responsibility of ensuring this upon the government. It recognises 21 disabilities and focuses on the need for accessibility and barrier-free infrastructure in our country. While some progress has been made, we still have long way to go for both accessibility and full implementation of the laws.

People with disabilities are the largest minority in the world. The wheel chair user of Sarah Tucker had achieved great things in her life. Sarah Tucker, a physically challenged, confined to her room but her trust in Jesus Christ and zeal for missionary work never declined. She wrote numerous articles which highlights missionary works, charity and their sacrificial deeds. She had great concern for the welfare of other people but she had limited mobility. When Tucker knew about Indian women and their mental and physical suffering both at home and working places under various appalling conditions, she was very much saddened and their pathetic conditions very much affected her. She realized the root problem in Indian women's suffering is their illiteracy, lack of education and motivation. She heard



Think India (Quarterly Journal)

ISSN: 0971-1260 Vol-22, Special Issue-05

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR

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



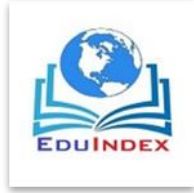
that there was no proper educational institution in Southern India so she made up her mind to have a separate educational institution to impart knowledge to Indian women. She realized that education helps women to face the tomorrow's challenges and establish them as worthy citizens. She and her friends raised funds for the proposed institution in India – a small school for training teachers for elementary schools in Tirunelveli District in South India. After this the Sarah Tucker High School started, which was raised to college in 1895.

Helen Keller was a prolific American author, political activist and lecturer. She was born on June 27, 1880, in Tuscumbia, Alabama. After the severe fever she was deaf and blind. Her father, Arthur H. Keller was the Captain in the Confederate Army, and her mother, Kate Adams, was his second wife and many years younger. There were no days or nights in Helen's world. Helen Keller was smart. She followed her mother around everywhere. She clung to her skirts. Helen Keller noticed different smells. She felt vibrations as people and things around her. Over time, she found ways to communicate.

Helen Keller was the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. She was born more than 100 years ago, Helen learned to speak and read and write. She was both deaf and blind. When she grew up, there were a few numbers of schools for deaf and blind children. Few blind people learned how to read and write. She not only did both but also wrote several best-selling books. In the book, *I AM Helen Keller* Grace Norwich points out: "It actually hurt my feeling when others insisted that I was always sweet and earnest. More than anything else, I wanted to be an ordinary girl and take part in which I called 'the everything nothing of life.' I wish I might be taken just as normal life' ((2). In the book, *Who was Helen Keller?* Grace Thompson points out: "Imagine that your ears are stuffed with cotton. You can't hear anything- not even someone shouting. A blindfold covers your eyes. You can't see anything, either. Your world is dark and silent. This was Helen Keller's world ((8).

Helen spent her life fighting for the rights of disabled people all over the world. Once introduced to the world of politics, Helen became a member of the Socialist Party of America and the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured people.

There are so many disabilities achieve great things in their lives and especially the achievement of Helen Keller and Sarah Tucker; an example of how we have the power to overcome the obstacles that come our way. Their achievements promote and support the disabilities and also the common people.



Think India (Quarterly Journal)

ISSN: 0971-1260 Vol-22, Special Issue-05

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR

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



Works Cited

De., Simone Beauvoir. *The Second Sex*. Translated and Edited by H.M. Parshley, London: Vintage Books, 1997. Print.

Srivastava, Poornam. *Garden of Eve*. Delhi : Adhyayan Publishers & Distributors, 2004. Print.

Gare, Thompson. *Who Was Helen Keller?*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2003. Print.

Disability studies is an academic discipline that examines the meaning, nature and consequences of disability. This field focuses on the impairment of an individual's mind or body but disability is considered as a social construct. People with disabilities are the largest minority in the world. The wheel chair user of Sarah Tucker had achieved great things in her life. Sarah Tucker, a physically challenged, confined to her room but her trust in Jesus Christ and zeal for missionary work never declined. She wrote numerous articles which highlights missionary works, charity and their sacrificial deeds. She had great concern for the welfare of other people but she had limited mobility. When Tucker knew about Indian women and their mental and physical suffering both at home and working places under various appalling conditions, she was very much saddened and their pathetic conditions very much affected her. Helen Keller was the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. She was born more than 100 years ago, Helen learned to speak and read and write. She was both deaf and blind. When she grew up, there were a few numbers of schools for deaf and blind children.

Kew Words: Disability; Suffering; Sacrificial; Impairment;