

Representing the Effects of the Bhopal Tragedy: A Study of Select Fiction in English

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of*

Master of Philosophy
In
English

by
Karthika Balachandran
(Reg. No. 1434101)

Under the Guidance of
Dr. Arya Aiyappan
Assistant Professor



Declared as Deemed to be University under Section 3 of UGC Act 1956

Department of English

CHRIST UNIVERSITY
BANGALORE, INDIA
December 2015

Approval of Dissertation

Dissertation entitled Representing the Effects of the Bhopal tragedy: A Study of Select Fiction in English by Karthika Balachandran Reg. No. 1434101 is approved for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English.

Examiners:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Supervisor(s):

Chairman:

Date: _____

Place: Bangalore

DECLARATION

I, Karthika Balachandran, hereby declare that the dissertation, titled *Representing the Effects of the Bhopal Tragedy: A Study of Select Fiction in English* is a record of original research work undertaken by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in English. I have completed this study under the supervision of Dr. Arya Aiyappan, Assistant Professor, Department of English.

I also declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other title. It has not been sent for any publication or presentation purpose. I hereby confirm the originality of the work and that there is no plagiarism in any part of the dissertation.

Place: Bangalore

Date:

Karthika Balchandran

Reg. No. 1434101

Department of English

Christ University, Bangalore

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation submitted by Karthika Balchandran (Reg. No. 1434101) titled *Representing the Effects of the Bhopal Tragedy: A Study of Select Fiction in English* is a record of research work done by him/her during the academic year 2014-2015 under my/our supervision in partial fulfillment for the award of Master of Philosophy in English.

This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other title. It has not been sent for any publication or presentation purpose. I hereby confirm the originality of the work and that there is no plagiarism in any part of the dissertation.

Place: Bangalore

Date:

Dr. Arya Aiyappan

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Christ University, Bengaluru

Signature of the Head of the Department

Department of English

Christ University, Bengaluru

Acknowledgement

This research project would not have been possible without the support of my family, friends and teachers. I would like to thank my guide Dr. Arya Aiyappan and my co-guide Dr. Neeraja for their valuable instructions and guidance at each and every step of the research. Without them, this research would not have been possible. They have always believed in my capabilities as a research scholar. I would also like to thank Dr. Bidyut Bhusan, for giving me his valuable suggestions on my research and for enlightening me on various aspect of my research topic. The M.philprogramme coordinators Mr. Joshua .G and Mr. Joseph Edward Felix have always been available to clarify our doubts and guide us throughout. I also thank the Research Committee for the feedback given at the time of various presentations. My classmates have always inspired and helped me during various stages of this research. I thank them all. Last but not least, I thank my parents for believing in me and supporting me throughout.

Contents

Approval of Dissertation	ii
Declaration	iii
Certificate	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Contents	vi
Abstract	vii
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	
Chapter 2	21
Effects on the Body and Construction of Victim	
Chapter 3	49
Construction of Victimhood Leading to Identity Crisis: A Study on Change in Identity	
Chapter 4	83
Conclusion	
Transformation of Identity and Empowerment of Victims	
Bibliography	93

Abstract

The main aim of this research is to study the representation of the Bhopal tragedy and to examine its effects on the various characters, who are victims in the fictional accounts, *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha and *A Breath of Fresh Air* by Amulya Malladi. In both the novels, the authors try to set forth the major aftereffects of the tragedy. One major aftereffect of the tragedy is the physical effects which lead to the construction of victim. Another major aftereffect of the tragedy is the identity crisis faced by the victims as a result of the physical effects of the tragedy on their bodies. The introductory chapter is a review of literature describing the possible aftereffects of the Bhopal tragedy on body, identity and issues related to empowerment and human rights of the victims. The second and third chapter analyses how the physical effects of the Bhopal tragedy lead to the construction of a victim, finally resulting in identity crisis and a transformed identity. The fourth chapter (conclusion) shows how the acceptance of a transformed identity leads to the empowerment of victims in both novels.

Keywords: Body, Identity, Victim, Identity crisis, Transformed Identity, Empowerment

Chapter 1

Introduction

The term 'Disaster' comes from the French and the Italian words *Desaster* and *Disastro* which mean 'bad star'. It refers to a tragedy or calamity caused by the unfavourable position of the celestial planets. In simple words, a disaster refers to any situation that creates continuous impacts on the lives of human beings affected by it. The term 'Disaster' can be defined in many ways. The work *Disaster Planning and Control* written by William M .Kramer and published in 2009, in association with World Health Organization, defines a disaster as any event that "disrupts or disturbs normal conditions of existence" (2) thus resulting in suffering for those affected by it.

Many sociologists and psychologists have come up with varying definitions of disasters. Qurantalli and Gilbert, two famous sociologists, define a disaster as an incident that disturbs the social relations and lives of people affected, thus leading to crisis and uncertainty. Other definitions include the explanation of the word in terms of a tragedy that arises out of natural or man-made activities, which create negative effects on life, health, air, soil, water etc. Throughout history, the idea of, What is a disaster? What impacts can it have on the lives of the people? What are the aftereffects faced by the people? has undergone serious modifications. Traditionally, disasters were considered to be the result of supernatural powers and were characterized as 'Acts of God', based on the belief that nothing could be done about their occurrence. Later on, with growing enlightenment and education, disasters have become synonymous with acts of nature. However, in the present world, the acts of human beings are blamed for the occurrence of a disaster. Thus, with this changing meaning of disaster, emerge two forms of disasters: Man-made disasters and Natural disasters. While natural disasters are

related to events in nature, the causes of man-made disasters vary. The major causes include the technological mistakes and breakdown arising out of human negligence, accidental spillage of harmful substances, careless handling of harmful chemicals resulting in damage to people and environment etc. The common aftereffects of a disaster are both physical and mental in nature. The physical effects of a disaster include suffering, injuries, pain etc. while the emotional effects include fear, emotional numbness, grief etc. For many people these effects often disappear with time but for a majority of people these effects are long lasting and continue to affect their daily lives. The main aim of this research is to study the representation of the Bhopal tragedy and to examine its effects on the various characters, who are victims in the fictional accounts, *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha and *A Breath of Fresh Air* by Amullya Malladi.

The Bhopal disaster, commonly known as the Bhopal tragedy took place on the 3rd of December, 1984. Around half a million people who lived near the Union Carbide Pesticide Factory in Bhopal were exposed to the toxic gas leak from the company. While many died in their sleep, several others were coughing, with a burning sensation in their eyes and nose, dizziness and vomiting blood. They rushed out of their homes only to be engulfed by a poisonous white fog. According to the Madhya Pradesh Government, the death toll of the tragedy was more than fifteen thousand. Around hundred thousand people still bear the scars of the tragedy, in the form of physical and mental effects. Apart from the impact on the body and mind, the dangerous gas also contaminated the air, soil, water and the environment around the place. Even after more than twenty- five years of the tragedy, people in Bhopal still suffer from the aftereffects. Such aftereffects are in the form of genetic disorders, cancer, deformities and disabilities, gynecological problems, respiratory problems, blindness etc. Thus even the future generations are not spared from the consequences caused by the chemical disaster.

The major objective of this research is to examine how the effects of the Bhopal tragedy are represented in the aforementioned two novels. The project attempts to find answers to questions such as, How the Bhopal tragedy has brought about a change in identity among the victims in the novels? How an industrial disaster has left an everlasting impact on the bodies of the victims? as well as How a chemical disaster like the Bhopal tragedy became a form of empowerment for the victims to face the world outside and fight for justice?

The primary texts include *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha and *A Breath of Fresh Air* by Amulya Malladi. The novel *Animal's People* deals with the story of 'Khaufpur', a fictitious representation of Bhopal and how the city is affected by the poisonous gas leak from the 'Kampani' situated in the city. The narrator in this novel is 'Animal', an orphaned boy of about 19 years of age. In the novel, Animal has a twisted spine as a result of inhaling the poisonous gas. Thus he has to walk on all fours unlike other human beings. The novel explores the lives of the victims of the gas leak through the eyes of 'Animal' and also examines the effects of this tragedy in everyday life. Indra Sinha, through his novel, presents a microcosm of the Bhopal tragedy. *A Breath of Fresh Air* by Amulya Malladi is about Anjali, the female protagonist, who is a victim of the tragedy and whose life turns out differently than she had planned and expected after the disaster. The tragic event greatly damages her physical and mental condition and makes her move away from witnessing the trauma that she experiences. Both the authors have themselves witnessed the conditions of people who were greatly affected by the tragedy. Amulya Malladi herself was residing in Bhopal when the incident took place. However, she escaped from inhaling the poisonous gas because the wind was moving in the opposite direction. In her interview given to the newspaper, 'Los Angeles Times' on the 25th anniversary of the Bhopal tragedy, Malladi expressed her views on her novel. Malladi had worked with the victims

of the tragedy and confesses that the female protagonist in her novel, *A Breath of Fresh Air* is based on a victim, whom she had known for several years. The author doesn't know how she could tell the story of that woman victim. Even after many years, Malladi was not able to forget her and finally found a voice for the experiences of the victim in the form of a novel.

Indra Sinha, on the other hand, is a writer and social worker, whose novel *Animal's People* is the result of his long-term acquaintance with the Bhopal survivors. He has been conducting campaigns for the justice of the Bhopal victims since 1993 and is also a part of the Bhopal Medical Appeal programme. The characters in the novel are reflections of the real people whom he had met in Bhopal. Thus, both the novels guide us in examining the effects of the Bhopal tragedy on the characters who are the victims of the tragedy.

As a first step in this research, literary articles were collected on the novels and the Bhopal tragedy to understand better, the effects of the tragedy from the perspective of the three objectives mentioned. The articles collected bring out a multi-dimensional view of the incident as far as the effects on the body and identity are concerned. Articles on how the Bhopal tragedy becomes a form of empowerment for the victims also form part of the literature review done as part of this research. The article "Evolution of Identity" by Conger, published in 1964, examines how change in identity is considered one of the major consequences of a disaster. He uses the concept of 'Identity Crisis' by the famous psychoanalyst Erik Erikson to explain the concept of change in identity. Conger is of the opinion that, the people affected by the disaster are often faced with clarifying their doubts as to who he/she is. Such a doubt arises because the victims experience a change in their behavior, their self as well as their trust in them and the world outside.

The dilemmas and confusions experienced by the victims in their search for identity often confront them with their own fears of death, dissolution, loss etc as a result of the tragic incident. The victim's relation to the public outside is made problematic through his painful experiences of the tragic event. The response of the society towards the victim also adds to this. Such a situation gives rise to alienation, isolation making way for a change in identity. Thus, there is a confusion of who a person is exactly, resulting in an alternation of identity. The article also examines how life turns out differently after the tragedy which involves unusual stress and coping with new and unfamiliar situations. A victim has no trust in oneself or in others in the world outside, as a result of the impact created by the incident. This is followed by an identity crisis and finally a change in identity which helps him to face society and the difficulties in his life. This article by Conger helped in understanding the symptoms related to identity crisis.

Dynes, in his article, "Response to Social Crisis and Identity in the aftermath of a Disaster," also mentions identity change as one of the major characteristic features of the aftermath of a tragic event, especially a man-made disaster. This article gives emphasis to the ideas of A.H Barton, a scientist and psychoanalyst. The article begins by saying that when disaster strikes, whether it is natural or man-made, it is more like an event or process that affects many aspects of the lives of the individual. Barton describes identity crisis resulting in identity change as not a terminal crisis but a point of development and growth for the individuals affected by the disaster. The change in identity is a process of dynamic transformation. Dyne extends this concept and describes the different levels at which this change in identity takes place among the victims of the disaster. Initially at the time of the disaster, the victims respond instantly to the sights and sounds of the event in the form of physical reactions like anxiety, fear, mouths going dry, a feeling of shock etc. This is what Dyne describes as the 'First Disaster Phase'. The long

lasting effects of the tragedy occur after first stage. The disaster questions the attitudes, thoughts, and day to day events in the lives of those affected. Before the disaster the victims had assumed that their lives were secure and had some purpose. They had great belief in themselves and society. Such an assumption gave them courage to face any problems in life. The occurrence of a disaster changes such notions and beliefs. Soon the victims realize the issue of insecurity in their lives. They feel disturbed as they find it difficult to make decisions. In this phase, the victims have not yet overcome the disaster and are disturbed by it all the time. This stage is called the 'Impact Stage' or the 'Second Disaster'. It is in the last phase called the 'Reconstruction Stage' that victims realize the aftereffects and make attempts to negotiate with their loss. Soon they accept the tragic incident as part of their lives and this acceptance ultimately results in their embracing a new identity. This article helped in laying a good foundation for the step-by-step analysis of the characters' identities in the novels.

Becker's article "Psychological Effects of Chemical Disasters" describes the various effects of many chemical disasters that have taken place all over the world. In this article he gives special emphasis to the complexity of the psychological effects of chemical and radiological disasters in comparison to natural disasters. According to him, after natural disasters, the people affected try together to sort out their lives and thus try to lead a normal life. They realize that they are part of a common suffering, chaos and miseries. Such a thought brings them together. Thus issues of identity crisis, alienation and transformation of identity are comparatively less compared to man-made disasters. On the other hand in the case of chemical disaster, the situation is characterized by confusion and ambiguity, as the consequences vary depending upon the exposure of the people to the poisonous gas. As a result, it leads to divisions and categorization. Srinivasa Murthy in the article 'Disaster and Mental Health: Revisiting

Bhopal’ and ‘Psychological Consequences of Bhopal Tragedy’ by Renu Kapoor talk about the major reasons for the change in identity as far as the victims of the Bhopal tragedy are concerned. Kapoor has brought out a detailed case study of various victims and has examined the reasons for identity crisis leading to a change in identity. Murthy, on the other hand, has brought out a general version of how the Bhopal tragedy has affected the identity of the victims. According to both, the Bhopal tragedy makes the victims not only physically damaged but also emotionally scarred. The victims always have reflections and recollections of the incident in the form of nightmares, dreams, thoughts etc. which breaks the smooth flow of their lives. Questions start to occupy them like ‘Why me?’ or ‘What has happened to me?’ or ‘Why am I like this?’ start to occupy them. Victims of the incident always feel that they have changed. It creates a feeling of missing their old self. Kapoor is of the opinion that when the disaster is man-made and is purposefully inflicted on the people, it destroys trust in oneself and the people around. Thus it results in confusions and conflicts among those affected and the society outside.

The article “Poisoned Chalice” by Chitra Divakaruni talks about the novel *A Breath of Fresh Air* by Amulya Malladi, where she gives importance to the character of the female protagonist, Anjali, a victim of the Bhopal tragedy. Divakaruni talks more about the identity crisis faced by Anjali in the novel. After the tragedy, especially with her sick child, Anjali’s life is often disturbed by the memories of the disaster in the form of nightmares and flashbacks. Being a divorcee and the mother of a sick child makes her life difficult in the traditional Indian society. Her troubled married life and her exposure to the poisonous gas make her life miserable. The article “Reading the Human- Animal Borderland in *Animal’s People*” by Anne Patricia Fagan talks about the character ‘Animal’ as the typical example of a victim of identity crisis as a result of the Bhopal tragedy. The article examines the identity crisis faced by the character

‘Animal’ who lies in between animal and human being. The novel explores in detail the dilemmas and confusions faced by Animal, as he doesn’t know whether he is an animal or a human. However, by the end of the novel, there is a change in his identity especially after his act of recognizing himself with the members of the struggle for justice.

The works *Body Keeps the Score: Memories of Body and Disaster* and *The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Body: Disaster and Body* by Bessel Van der Kolk and Lars Weisaeth respectively talk about how the changes in body after a specific disaster affect the victim. The memories of the disaster are tied to the body also. These basically take the form of a combination of fleeting images, sounds and movements of the body. Our bodies often change and develop right from childhood till death. The society that surrounds us, our relationships with people, our habits, appearances, capacities and identities are also associated with our body. Bodily change sometimes occurs as a result of consciously formulated actions but such changes might also occur in circumstances and situations over which individuals have little or no control. Using ideas from sociology, the works examine how the body is socially formed and located. What it means to be man or woman, animal or human is understood socially.

Another major article examined here is “Gender and Disaster” by Kenneth J Smith where he describes the role played by women victims in activities and movements for seeking justice for the victims of a disaster across communities. Traditionally, social differences between women and men have been viewed as the natural consequences of biological differences and social behaviour. Importance was also given to the traditionally attributed masculine and feminine behaviour. However Smith is of the opinion that, the concept of gender is understood as a characteristic feature associated with society as a result of social interaction. It gains prominence as a social structure rather than an individual role played in society. Using various

incidents like Bhopal tragedy, Katrina Hurricane etc he describes the role played by women as leaders of social organizations and movements urging the victims to fight for justice. They have broken the shells of restrictions imposed by culture and society and have come to the forefront. Most of these women are themselves victims of the tragedy and their exposure to the aftereffects of the disasters have made them strong and confident to fight not only for themselves but also for the entire community affected by the disaster. The article thus talks about how women, breaking from restrictions in society, become leaders of movements and organizations for the welfare of their community, affected by a disaster.

The article *Interpreting the Maternal Organisation*, by Heather Hopfl hints about the narrative strategies used for describing the Bhopal tragedy used by the Union Carbide factory lawyers in their law suits. After analyzing and examining many articles written on the Bhopal tragedy, Hopfl is of the opinion that the story of Bhopal presented in a majority of articles is discontinuous and unsatisfactory. The plot-line is chronological but there are digressions, breaks and absence of many elements associated with the tragedy, which make the plot unclear and confused. Many of the post-disaster analysis articles on the Bhopal tragedy basically talk about the history of the Union Carbide Plant, the night of the disaster through the testimonies and memories of the affected victims, the aftermath of the incident in the form of medical reports and empirical data and also gives emphasis to the plans and strategies introduced by the government for the victims and the injustice done to them by the factory. However, not many articles talk about the consequences of the disaster on the victims such as the long-lasting effects, the poverty and present day life situations of the victims and especially about the movements and activism in Bhopal that are gaining immense popularity all over the world. Hopfl, using the ante-narrative strategy popularized by David Boje, creates a narrative that explores deeply, the post-disaster

scenario. Such explorations and examinations of the how the Bhopal tragedy became a source for the empowerment of victims forms the major idea in the article, “The Movement in Bhopal and Its Lessons”, by Satinath Sarangi. Both Hopfl and Sarangi are of the opinion that an immediate aftermath of the tragedy was its widespread economic fallout with loss of revenue, poverty and the incapacity of the victims, especially those belonging to the poorer sections, to get jobs. A single night snatched away their health, peace and their ability to earn a living leaving them in mental agony. Rehabilitation and the urgent need to spread awareness disseminate information, give medical aid and psychological support and carrying out community-level work became crucial and requirements. However, what happened instead was gross injustice and deprivation. The victims were left to face their fate alone in poverty and illness. Being faced with such hardships, as well as the long-term aftereffects of the tragedy, victims of the tragedy decided to come together and fight for a common cause. As a result, protests and grassroots movements took place in those affected areas, where the victims, comprising both men and women were living through an experience of acute deprivation. Thus, in the face of repression, apathy and distortion of facts, social activism helped in creating a different perspective or space for the victims, that empowered them to challenge and fight for justice.

Suroopa Mukherjee, in both her articles, “Dancing in the Streets: Narratives of Resistance in Bhopal Eighteen Years after the Gas Tragedy” and “We Are Flames Not Flowers: A Gendered Reading of the Social Movement for Justice in Bhopal”, talks about the role played by women in the movements in Bhopal. As a result of the injustice and hardships faced by the victims many organizations came into existence, mainly with women in the forefront. Women, especially the gas victims belonging to the working class, came forward to take on an administration that had virtually collapsed. The activism consisted of women who were making their own demands.

Grassroots groups were formed, with a large number of women to register their protest against the failure of schemes for the rehabilitation of gas victims. Thus there was a centripetal move from home to workplace to the streets in search of collective strength, leadership potential, decision making etc. The Bhopal tragedy made the woman unite for a common cause and encouraged them to take up social issues in their hands. They also raised issues on inequality, right to education and freedom to take part in social activities. Thus, the Bhopal tragedy became a source of empowerment for the victims, especially the women victims. The grassroots movements and the role played by women as described in both the articles are relevant as far as the novels under discussion are concerned.

The articles “ 3/12 to 9/11: Future of Human Rights” and “Twilight of Human Rights in India” by Surya Deva and Upendra Baxi state that the disaster in Bhopal was and always will remain a human tragedy and a tragedy for human rights. Both the articles talk about the violation of the basic human rights of the victims in general, such as the Right to Life, Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Living, Right to a Remedy, and Right to a Safe Environment. However, in ‘Clouds of Injustice’, a special issue on the violation of Human Rights published by Amnesty International exclusively based on the Bhopal tragedy and the article “Psychological Consequences of Bhopal Tragedy” by Renu Kapoor hints about the violation of human rights of the ‘Individual Self’ as far as the victims are concerned. Both the articles talk about personal identity from the point of evolution of Human Rights. The individualism described here gives more importance to the individual and not society, and is the main context for human rights. However, in crucial situations, especially in the aftermath of a disaster like the Bhopal tragedy there are possibilities that the victim’s individual rights are violated especially with respect to his/her identity, character and body by the community in which he/she lives. The violation of

human rights with respect to the body of the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy, is evident from the article “From Bhopal to Biometrics: Biological Citizenship in the Age of Globalization” by Pramod. K Nayer. The article talks about the body and traces the emergence of the new biological citizenship in India. Biological citizenship nowadays does not take a racial and nationalized form alone. The author states that bodies in the global south, especially in countries like India, lack biological citizenship in their own sovereign countries as their bodies become part of global systems and circuits of exchange. He makes this point clear by comparing the compensation given for victims in the 9/11 disaster in U.S.A and the Bhopal tragedy in India. The compensation given for the American victims was more than what was given to the Indian victims though the company that caused the disaster in India was owned by an American citizen. Thus, he is of the opinion that the biovalues for many in India are determined outside the nation’s geopolitical boundaries. The victims were given less compensation and denied biological citizenship despite proven and provable bodily injuries to Indian victims of the Bhopal tragedy. This article gives a glimpse into the way the bodies of victims are portrayed in the global market economy. Both the novels have characters that are denied biological citizenship and thus denied compensation. In the novel *Animal’s People*, Animal talks about those women and children including himself, who had to endure the aftereffects of the tragedy. They were never given compensation and there is one particular incident in the novel, where all those physically affected by the tragedy in the novel like Animal, Ma Franci, Rina Bhai, Zafar, Nisha’s father etc form a big mob in front of the court as part of their movement for justice.

The article “The Poor Remain Poor: A Post-humanist Rethinking of Literary Humanitarianism in Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People*” by Jennifer Rickel talks about how human rights have been violated in the case of the residents of Khaufpur. According to Rickel, Indra

Sinha's *Animal's People* questions the humanitarian viewpoint that promises to rescue the poor and describes this point by quoting examples from the text. The protagonist 'Animal' in the novel is neither considered human nor animal by society. Rickel uses the ideas of Stephen Herbrechter to examine the character of Animal from a post-humanist view point. He is considered as a diminished or crippled version of a human being. 'Animal' himself debates on whether or not to accept humanism. Rickel thus describes 'Animal' as a post-human, who retains the negative qualities of an animal because he was never accepted by society.

Individualism is a concept that affirms the priority of rights over duties and the independence of the individual over society. The ascription of rights does not depend on the social evaluation of personal qualities or merits. 'Animal' in Sinha's *Animal's People* is the perfect example for such violation of human rights. Though he is a human, he is called a 'Jaanvar' and treated like one. The study of violation of Human Rights in the articles doesn't give much emphasis to the way it takes place in terms of gender. Both the novels have many incidents to show such violations such as the way the women and child victims are treated the attitude of society towards widows and divorcee, the inequality of women to make decisions and participate in social activities etc. The representation of the survivor's body in texts representing the Bhopal tragedy is thus gendered - the woman's body is twice burdened in a disaster, first with the injury/disability caused by the disaster and secondly with respect to the greater difficulty in the social restitution of women.

The articles thus helped in getting a better insight into the objectives of the research and planning the chapters in this research. The second chapter is all about the effects of the tragedy on the body of the victims. The physical aftereffects of a tragedy are the most visible and concrete evidences for being characterized a victim. A disaster like the Bhopal tragedy can be

associated with a wide variety of adverse physical and mental effects. The consequences of a disaster can persist even after many years of the actual disaster. Various studies and research conducted on disaster and its aftereffects, have shown that apart from the mental effects, the people affected might also confront many physical effects. The most obvious impact of a disaster on the health of a population is the injuries caused by the disaster on the bodies of the victims. Our body like the mind is a part of all the different experiences we go through in our life. Body modification and transformation is becoming famous day by day in the present consumer culture. Nowadays, we have Cyborg individuals who are part -human and part-machine created, modified and enhanced by technology. They are basically hybrids of machine and organisms. Such people have a joint kinship with machines and popularize the idea of ‘becoming-other-than-human’. The perfect examples are artificial intelligence, artificial body parts etc. Though they are born human beings, they are not accepted in the society because of their modifications and transformations. However, the changes in the body may also occur as a result of a disaster and create a great impact on the person’s identity and capacity for action. . Thus chapter two examines how the changes on a victim’s body after the disaster, either in the form of physical deformities, diseases or bodily memories ,create a conflict or mismatch between their social and physical surroundings as well as their own biological needs and body potentialities. The various instances from the lives of the characters in both the novels are analyzed based on the point of view of how the social construction of the body takes place. The ideas of Chris Shilling and Bryan S Turner on social construction of the body as a feature creating social divisions among the victims of a disaster are utilized here. The various characteristic features that create divisions in terms of victims of a disaster and normal people begin with this construction of the body.

The third chapter describes the effects of the tragedy on the identities of the characters who are victims, in both the novels. It takes a long time to develop a specific personal identity and such an identity cannot be easily replaced. On the other hand, an individual may accept a different identity when he finds his original identity been disturbed or confused. Disasters, especially human-initiated ones, have power to disturb and affect the life and social relations of those people affected. This chapter attempts to examine how the effects on the body further lead to an identity crisis as far as the victim's life is concerned. The articles based on how the Bhopal tragedy can bring about a change in identity talked about the impact of the emotional effects of the tragedy on the victims. The ideas of psychologists like John. J. Conger, Russell, R Dynes and Steven. M Becker on change in identity and tragedy are used in this chapter to give an insight to the emotional effects of the tragedy, identity crisis, the various stages involved in the development of a new identity, the confusions and dilemmas faced by the victims etc. The chapter also attempts to examine the identity crisis faced by the characters, from the perspective of the shift from a 'victim' to a 'survivor'. A victim always finds him to be a part of many incidents in his life, where he feels he cannot control himself, especially his thoughts. He becomes arrogant, angry, suspicious, selfish and isolates himself/herself from others. Such a person has no trust in him/her or in others and the world outside. A survivor on the other hand has the courage and understanding to face any problem and also plays a very important role to help his community members, affected by the tragedy. Thereby the person becomes a unique human being by recovering from the tragedy by helping others and sharing a common responsibility.

The fourth chapter attempts to explain in a detailed manner how the Bhopal disaster has empowered the victims in both the novels. The victims of a disaster are affected both physically

and mentally even after many years after the original incident. As discussed in the above section, the physical effects are often quick and obvious while the mental effects are delayed and long lasting. After nearly escaping death and facing the long term difficulties of a disaster, the victim's identity gets transformed and reaches a phase where he/she accepts the tragedy that occurred as part of his/her life and continues to live helping others who were also affected by the tragedy. They are in a better position to face the society, question the attitude of the public towards them, seek justice for the wrongs done to them and fight for the good of all those affected by the disaster. This chapter basically examines how a specific tragedy has empowered the victims in different ways and made them powerful enough to question the society and world around them. The fifth and final chapter brings out the conclusions obtained in this research.

The Bhopal disaster that took place in India still remains a major topic of discussion, especially in terms of the injustice done to the victims. The fight for justice and compensation still continues in the Indian courts of justice. The disaster has been described by many as 'the unending tragedy', 'world's worst industrial disaster', 'a continuing disaster', 'continuing catastrophe' etc. Even twenty five years after the disaster, it still remains a major issue which inspired authors like Indra Sinha and Amulya Malladi to publish their novels *Animal's People* (2007) and *A Breath of Fresh Air* (2002). This research thus contributes to the continuing relevance of the Bhopal tragedy even in the present day. Nowadays, the readers are keen to know what exactly happened in the past and what effect this particular event had on its witnesses. A study like this always helps in providing insight to readers with such concerns. On the other hand, novels based on the Bhopal tragedy have not generated enough professional and academic research from a literary point of view. A major limitation of this study is that it examines how the aftereffects of the Bhopal tragedy are portrayed in fictional works rather than being

substantiated by testimonies and other non-fictional narratives. The research, however, attempts to overcome this gap by laying emphasis on each authors' function as witness in the case of these two novels, since both authors have based their 'fictional' universe of suffering on the actual historical event and have created their characters out of their own ethnographic work.

Works Cited

- Baxi, Upendra. "Twilight of Human Rights in India". *India International Centre Quarterly*. 30.2 (2003): 19-28. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Becker, M Steven. "Psychological Effects of Chemical Disasters." *Environmental Health Perspectives Journal*. 105.66(1997): 1557-1563. *ProQuest*. Web. 23 September 2014.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Recapturing the Past: Introduction*. Baltimore and London. John Hopkins University Press. 1995. Print
- Conger, J John. "The Evolution of Identity". *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*. 42.4 (1964): 36-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 September 2014.
- Deva, Surya. "From 3/12 to 9/11: Future of Human Rights." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 39.49(2004): 5198-5201. *JSTOR*. Web. 17 January 2015.
- Divakaruni, Chitra. *Poisoned Chalice*. Rev of *A Breath of Fresh Air*, by Amullya Malladi. Los Angeles Times 8 September 2002, Los Angeles ed: 7. Print.
- Dynes, R Russell. "Response to Social Crisis and Disaster." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 15.3. 9 (1977): 23-49. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Furedi, Frank. "The Changing Meaning of Disaster". *Area: The Royal Geographical Society Journal*. 39.4(2007): 482-489. *Springer*. Web. 17 January 2015.
- Hamilton, Carrie. *Oral History: An Introduction*. Rev. of *A Breath of Fresh Air*. New York. Oral History Society Press. 2011. Print.

- Hopl, Heather. *Interpreting the Maternal Organisation*(*Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development*). United Kingdom. Routledge Publishers. 2014. Print.
- Kapoor, Renu. "Psychological Consequences of Bhopal Tragedy". *Population and Environment Journal*. 13.3(1992): 209-215. *Springer*. Web. 17 January 2015.
- Krammer, K. William. *Disaster Planning and Control*. Oklahoma. Penwell Books. 2009. Print.
- Mahlstedt, Andrew. "Animal's Eyes: Spectacular Invisibility and the Terms of Recognition in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*." *Mosaic Journal for Literature*. 46.3(2013): 59-74. Web. 26 September 2015.
- Malladi ,Amullya. *A Breath of Fresh Air*. U.S.A. Random House Publishing. 2002.
- Mukherjee, Suroopa. "Dancing in the Streets": Narratives of Resistance in Bhopal Eighteen Years after the Gas Tragedy". *India International Centre Quarterly*. 30.1(2003): 170-180. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Mukherjee, Suroopa. "We Are Flames Not Flowers: A Gendered Reading of the Social Movement for Justice in Bhopal". *Interface*. 3.2(2011): 100-122. *Project Muse*. Web. 10 January 2015.
- Nayer. K Pramod. "From Bhopal to Biometrics: Biological Citizenship in the Age of Globalization". *Citizenship and Identity in the Age of Surveillance*. India. Cambridge University Press. 2015. Print.

Patricia, Anne Fagan. "Reading the Human- Animal Borderland in *Animal's People*." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 73.9(2009): 16-21. *Springer*. Web. 26 September 2014.

Rickel, Jennifer. "The Poor Remain Poor: A Post Humanist Rethinking of Literary Humanitarianism in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*". *Ariel Journal*. 43.1 (2012): 55-60. *Project Muse*. Web. 27 September 2015.

Sarangi, Satinath. "The Movement in Bhopal and Its Lessons". *Social Justice Article*. 23.4(1996): 100-108. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 September 2014.

Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. U.K. Pocket Books. 2007. Print.

Smith, Kenneth. "Gender and Disaster." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 21.2(1998): 175-195. *Springer*. Web. 17 September 2014.

Van, der Kolk Bessel. *Body Keeps the Score: Memories of Body and Disaster*. England. Guildford Press. 1996. Print.

Weisaeth, Laus. *The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Body: Disaster and Body*. New York. Viking Adult. 2014. Print

Chapter 2

Effects on the Body and Construction of Victim

Bhopal would have been known today as one of the capital cities in India if not for the events that took place on the night of December 3, 1984. On that night, Methyl Isocyanate gas spread over the sleeping population, transforming the place to a site of one of the world's worst chemical disasters. Around thousands of people were killed and many still suffer the aftereffects in the form of physical, mental, environmental, economic and social torment. Such a population, bearing the aftereffects of the tragedy, led to the creation of a category of people called the 'victims' of the tragedy. The effects of the disaster often disappear with passage of time for many people but for a majority of people these effects are long lasting and affect their daily lives, resulting in what is called victimization. Lourdes Lardigo, a famous psychologist and social analyst in his work *Victims and Survivors* published in 1995, describes victimization as "An act of treating a person badly based on a complaint, claim or discrimination" (Lardigo 25). Similarly, he describes a victim as "Any person suffering, harmed or experiencing loss as a result of a disaster, an accident, an intentional or unintentional act or situation" (Lardigo 32). Any person can become the victim of a disaster. There can be a single victim or many victims from the same situation.

One of the major criteria of harm caused by a tragedy is measured in terms of the physical injuries inflicted on the victims, especially on their bodies. Body becomes an important component in human life because it is the source for satisfying our needs, like the need to eat, drink, sleep etc. Most of these needs are physical needs and the satisfaction of such needs or necessity gives us pleasure. The various physical aftereffects of the Bhopal tragedy include illnesses especially affecting lung, kidney, breathing problems, birth defects, disability etc. In the case of a chemical disaster, the situation is characterized by ambiguity, because the way it affects different people is different. Some might suffer more injuries and bear long-lasting effects, while some might be affected less in terms of injury, loss and suffering. Both the novels used in this research namely *Animal's People* and *A Breath of Fresh Air* have representations of many such characters bearing the aftereffects of the tragedy on their bodies. The characters (who are also victims of the tragedy) in both the novels are part of a society that believes that the first and foremost evidence of human existence is the presence of a proper human body. Hence, the visible physical effects of the tragedy result in a hierarchy of victims that subsequently influences their degree of integration into society.

Both the novels tell the stories of the survivors of the Bhopal tragedy. However, certain characters still remain in a position of victimhood when seen through the eyes of the other members in the society. Nils Christie, in his famous work *Criminological Data as a Mirror for Society* published in 1973, is of the opinion that every victim will become a survivor. He also defines a survivor as, one who has survived/overcome the tragedy. Such a person continues to live life undisturbed and is accepted as part of society. In both novels, such a process of acceptance and continuation of life occurs in terms of many factors and not merely the factor of surviving the Bhopal tragedy. Some major factors visible in the selected novels include physical

norms and abilities, education, having a proper family, proper civil code, wealth, marriage etc. Thus, the hierarchy of victims and the social acceptance of a victim depend upon many norms and conditions which are constructed by society as represented in the novels. Hence, even after outliving the Bhopal tragedy, the characters like Animal, Anjali and Amar still fall in the category of ‘victim’ and not a ‘survivor’, basically because they fail to follow such socially constructed rules and regulations of acceptance. This chapter entitled ‘Effects on the Body and Construction of Victims’ puts forward the idea that victimhood is socially constructed in terms of the effects on the body and continues even after outliving the tragedy.

This chapter begins by reviewing the definitions of the body as a social construct and analyzing the major aftereffects of the Bhopal tragedy on the bodies of the various characters in both the novels. This is followed by an insight into ‘Who is a victim?’ and ‘What is victimization?’. The chapter also talks about how the fictional representation of victims takes place in both the novels. The third section of this chapter talks about how these victims form a community and also lists out the various norms and conditions created and managed in such societies. The concluding paragraph indicates how the victim is characterized by keeping in mind the above discussed points.

Human body and identity are closely related topics. The relationship between the body and self has changed over time. Before the Industrial Revolution gathered prominence, our body was the main source to produce things. For working-class people the body was the chief component which helped in many processes like sowing, reaping and harvesting crops. Nowadays, we follow a body image which is normally thin, tanned and muscular, and this image came into existence from the daily physical labour carried out by the people from the past. Such an image of the human body finds prominence and becomes the front covers of magazines,

journals, advertisements etc. People do find time to mould the features of their body and consider it as an important component in their lives. The beauty of the body adds confidence to the identity of a person. Thus a drastic change in the concept of body has taken place. Earlier the body was a method of production but now our bodies have become a form of work. Rather than being the means of production the human body is now becoming the item of production itself. Our bodies share a major portion in the formation of specific identities. The shape, features, colour etc of our bodies add to the identity that talks a great deal about the culture, country, race , personal values etc to which we belong. Thus the human body now becomes a part of society and culture. The characteristic features for the acceptance of a human body in specific society are regulated and controlled in the interests of the population. Rather than being something personal, the body is now becoming more and more socially constructed. Our bodies also play a very important role in shaping our identity. Both the novels used in this research have the fictitious representation of the Bhopal tragedy. A common factor that runs through the novels is that both represent how the identities of the protagonists are greatly affected by the aftereffects of the tragedy on their bodies. Body has now become a primary focus in the construction of identity. In the novels, the first criteria for the construction of a victim identity occur in terms of the physical features. Hence, the relevance of the social construction of the body is the central focus in this chapter.

Contemporary sociologists like Bryan S Turner and Chris Shilling support the view that, Sociology is basically a form of interpretative science based on social actions and interactions. Shilling, in his famous work *Changing Bodies*, published in 2008 rightly suggests that, “The body has historically been something of an ‘absent presence’ in Sociology” (Shilling 18). However, since the 1990s, the body started becoming an object as well as a subject in

sociological studies. The concept of body soon started appearing at the very heart of sociological discussions but didn't achieve much focus as an object in its own right. It is only during the early 20th century that the concept of the body became a subject of interest among sociologists. With respect to the social, political, cultural and technological changes, the experiences of the body started becoming more and more visible, especially with practices like plastic surgery, tattooing, fashion, fitness, illness practices etc. The concept of 'Body,' which was not mentioned in any sociological studies in the beginning, started occupying an important place in the discipline of sociology.

Shilling, in his work *Changing Bodies*, published in 2008, states that the experiences of the body are "Layered, complex and at different levels with respect to human subjective experiences, interaction, cultural processes, society and history" (Shilling 21). Body is not merely a skeleton wrapped with muscle but also an object full of meanings. He further states that the body is also a part of society. According to him, body as an objective entity can never be separated from its subjective properties. A person does not merely occupy a static body but becomes a part of a process of being. In this process of being, society plays a very important role. Shilling is of the opinion that, what we refer to and associate as 'Me', 'Mine' and 'Myself' have both general and individual implications. Such concepts of 'I' have no relevance unless and until they are differentiated from 'You', 'He' or 'She'. Hence, there is always a tendency to differentiate the 'Self' from the 'Other.' Thus, Shilling states that each and every person in a society has certain conditions or rules and regulations which lead to the construction of what a person should be. This same theory he applies to the concept of meanings associated with bodies also.

When we gaze at the bodies of others, we interpret their characters and features based on the visible physical evidences. The existence and acceptance of a person in a particular society is defined in terms of 'who we are'. However, the features determining 'who we are' are determined in terms of those characteristic features that come under the category of 'who we are not' and only then are we accepted in society. Hence, the social construction of 'who we are' to be accepted in a society is in contradiction to the conception of the 'other'. These notions of 'self' and the 'other' are deeply embedded in society. Such conceptions often become institutionalized. The 'self' here refers to what society accepts as normal human beings- their physical features, behavior etc. The concept of 'other' refers to the differences from the normally accepted conditions of the 'self'.

Turner in his work *Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* published in 2008 gives emphasis to the fact that human body is also a part of society and culture. According to him, the features for the acceptance of a body is greatly influenced and controlled according to the interests of the people. The human body has to be systematically fashioned, sustained and presented in everyday life. Thus, Turner states that "The acceptance of a body is realized and actualized through a variety of socially regulated practices" (Turner 56).

A disaster like the Bhopal tragedy can be associated with a wide variety of adverse physical and mental effects. The consequences of a disaster can persist even many years after the actual disaster. The effects can be physical as well as psychological. Psychologists like Van der Kolk and Laus Weisaeth, in their works *Body Keeps the Score: Memories of Body and Disaster* and *The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Body: Disaster and Body* are of the opinion that, body memories are the most common evidence of the aftereffects of a tragedy on the affected people. "Just like the mind, our body also remembers everything, especially in the form of

sounds, smells, touch, taste etc” (Kolk 52). The memories of the body persist even many years after the original tragedy. Such memories often come suddenly and they are uncontrollable. Those affected people have the same physical experiences as they had at the time of the tragedy when such recollections occur. It is more like re- telling the story again and again. Such memories in turn try to convince those affected by the tragedy that they will have such flashes of memory throughout their lives, adding to their victimization.

Animal, in the novel *Animal's People*, has such recollections and reflections throughout the novel. He still remembers the cold night when the gas tragedy took place. He always feels the pain in his back and a feeling of burning sensation while breathing. As a person affected by the tragedy, the flashbacks occur in the form of a coughing, burning feeling. Animal recollects his eye burned and watered. His vision became impossible amidst the white fog. He also experienced bodily memories in the form of a burning pain in his neck and across his shoulders. That fire of pain is his first body memory of the tragedy. He had such memories of the pain experienced at the time of the tragedy even after many years of the actual incident where he felt the pain gripping his neck and forcing him down. The following lines convey the memories of Animal associated with his body:

I always feel a pain in my neck, forcing me down and down. It made me stare at my feet while a devil rode my back in the form of white fog and chafed me with red hot tongs at my face. (Sinha 15)

Other characters in the novel also have such recollections and reflections. Somraj, Nisha's father and the famous musician always has memories of the tragedy in the form of a white fog. He saw it in the half light from the street, as a white insidious cloud that crept in

stealthily and silenced him forever. Huriya Bi is another person in the novel who has such body memories. She always has flashes of memories in which she feels a burning sensation in her stomach and blood on her face.

Anjlai, in *A Breath of Fresh Air*, feels the impact of the incident, especially in her body. She often felt as if her lungs were going to explode and she struggled hard to breathe. However she felt she was not breathing air but something toxic and acidic. In the novel, she tries to shake off the burning sensation and she often feels that the burning sensation will never go away from her. She often felt her lungs being clasped by hands from inside with a burning feeling. She always felt someone clasping her throat and her eyes watering and burning. The following words of Anjali indicate how she has bodily memories of the Bhopal tragedy:

I always felt during my asthma attack that struggle to breathe. I felt my lungs would implode and even though I tried to suck in as much air as I could, it was not really air that I was breathing. (Malladi 4)

She always felt that she was breathing something poisonous which creates difficulty for her to breathe properly. She became dizzy at the time of her asthma attacks and felt that the terrible burning sensation would never go away from her. At the time of such reflections, she always felt the urge to breathe more and more air as though her heart had stopped beating. Nothing seemed more important to her at that time other than breathing. She had taken it for granted, the act of breathing, for all her life and during such sensuous memories of the tragedy, she experienced pain and suffocation as if her lungs are about to burst. Thus, body memories are one major effect of the tragedy on the body which indicates the beginning of victimization.

People all over the world are familiar with such common aftereffects of a disaster which include both physical and mental aspects. For many people, these impacts of the tragedy (both physical and mental) often disappear with time. Yet for a majority of people, these effects are long lasting and influence their daily lives resulting in victimization.

Various definitions have also been attributed to victims which have changed with time. The term victim originates from the Latin word '*Victima*', a term which was once used to refer to the animals sacrificed in religious ceremonies. A victim can simply be defined in simple words as any person suffering, harmed or experiencing loss as a result of a disaster, an accident, an intentional or unintentional act or situation. The famous psychologist Erwin Raldolph Parson in his famous work *Victims of Disaster* published in 2004 describes victimization as, "Living a life upside down with confusion, helplessness, anxiety and always having a feeling that life is not the same as it was earlier" (Parson 21). It is also a process of being a victim or being victimized by others. Another famous definition for victimization is put forward by Moira Sutcliffe in her work *Victimology* published in 1995. She is of the opinion that, victimization is basically a process or an act where the construction of victim takes place by others, as a result of physical or psychological differences caused by an intentional or unintentional act. The famous sociologist and criminologist Nils Christie, in his work *Criminological Data as a Mirror for Society* published in 1973, comes up with his most celebrated concept of an 'Ideal Victim'. Such a victim is very weak in relation to the offender, blameless for what happened to him/her, confused, angry, lonely etc. Most of the other theorists and psychologists working on the subject of victimization basically follow this concept of an ideal victim in their studies.

As far as the recent studies on victimization are concerned, especially with the emergence of various civil rights movements on the discrimination of race, gender, disability etc, the

definitions regarding 'who' or 'what are victims' have been slightly altered and do not have a straightforward factual response. In the article, 'Victims and Society' by Pamela Davies, published in 2003, the author feels that what we know about victims basically depends upon the features attributed to a any person affected by a disaster, an accident, a crime etc emerging from a social or cultural discourse. Such assumptions lead to the generation of various categories and divisions among the victims and non-victims and even among the victims themselves. The civil rights movements mentioned earlier also portray a victim as being constructed and not born. There are certain groups of people who are at a higher risk of being constructed as a victim compared to many others affected by the same incident, such as women, children, the disabled etc. Thus, the definitions of who a victim is, or what are the basic characteristic features of a victim, are greatly shaped by the assumptions made by people in society.

The introduction to this chapter mentions the ambiguity created by a chemical disaster like the Bhopal tragedy and how the hierarchy of victims is created. In both the novels such hierarchies are created. As far as the people affected by the disaster in both the novels are concerned, such hierarchies and divisions occur more among the victims because the way they affects different people are different. Some might suffer more injuries and bear long lasting effects while some might be affected less in terms of injury, loss and suffering. Such ambiguities lead to the categorization of victims, resulting in divisions and discriminations. It is finally on the basis of such divisions and categories that assumptions are made on the different types of victims and the attitude towards them in the societies represented in the novels.

The village of Khaufpur in the novel *Animal's People* basically belongs to those affected by the gas leak from the Kampani. Most of the villagers are victims of the tragedy and bear the marks of the aftereffects of the tragedy on their body as well as in their minds. The society in

Khaufpur is composed of the victims but the way they treat different victims is different. Some major victims of the tragedy include Animal, Ma Franci, Somraj, Uttamchand, Sahara, Huriya Biwi etc and they all bear the aftereffects of the tragedy. Ma Franci lost her memory and has confusions with language. She finds it difficult to distinguish between Hindi, English and French. Her memory is greatly affected by the tragedy. She doesn't remember the Hindi that she learned after coming to Bhopal and talks in her native language which is French. She has poor eyesight as well as breathing problems. Somraj, on the other hand, was a famous singer from Khaufpur known all over India. However, after inhaling the poisonous gas from the Kampani, he began to develop serious problems in his lungs resulting in breathing problems. For a singer like him, the Kampani stole not only his breath but also his life because breath is the life of a singer. Soon he becomes a solemn and private man. Uttamchand, also known as 'Zindabhai', who runs a grocery shop in the novel, developed serious respiratory problems after the tragedy and always feels giddy. Sahara, another victim, suffers from cancer and gynecological problems. Animal, who is the narrator and the protagonist in the novel, has a twisted spine and is forced to walk on all fours because of the deformity in his spinal cord, after inhaling the poisonous gas as a baby. All these characters are victims of the tragedy. However, the citizens of Khaufpur treat Animal differently from the rest of the victims. The rest of the characters mentioned, despite bearing the aftereffects of the tragedy, are treated normally like other human beings and not like true victims of the tragedy except for Animal.

Ma Franci and Somraj are respectable personalities in the village. People always come to Ma Franci for advice and consolation. She is welcomed in all the families in Khaufpur. Somraj is still looked upon as a famous singer despite his illness. He continues to give lessons to the children of Khaufpur and helps them win prizes in competitions. Uttamchand is accepted as a

family member by almost all the families of Khaufpur. Sahara is looked after by her family and is considered a good housewife in Khaufpur. Animal's situation is, however, completely different. He is often alienated, and is not welcomed by any of the families. It is only after inhaling the poisonous gas that Animal has had to walk on all fours. Yet, he is called Animal, thereby stripping him of his human identity. There is no one to look after him, to feed him or to help him in any way. He remains an orphan and wanders around Khaufpur just like a stray animal. While characters like Ma Franci, Somraj, Uttamchand etc are all treated like normal human beings and not victims, the exact opposite happens in the case of the character Animal. He is treated like a true victim of the tragedy by those affected and unaffected by the disaster in Khaufpur. The perfect instance to support this argument from the novel is the way the Chaiwala, Chunaram, takes the foreign journalist who comes to Khaufpur to write stories about the victims of the tragedy, to Animal. Chunaram introduced him to many victims but the journalist was not convinced by their stories. However, when Chunaram introduced him to Animal, as the boy who lost everything on the night of the tragedy and who has to live with a twisted spine, the journalist is convinced and his eyes light up with amazement. Animal, on the other hand, was reluctant to narrate his story and feels that the journalist has come to suck stories out of him. He doesn't want strangers from far off countries to turn him into a story teller by repeating the same story again and again. The journalist, on the other hand, was ready to give anything to Animal to get his story because the journalist felt Animal was a true victim. The journalist is a total stranger in the village of Khaufpur, yet he recognizes Animal as the true victim. His twisted spine is one major reason for the journalist's conclusion. Moreover, he was illiterate and had no proper family. No one considered him as part of the village and even the way Chunaram treated Animal was enough for the journalist to come to such a conclusion. Chunaram addressed Animal as 'Little

brat', 'Cretin', 'Disabled idiot', 'Worm who crawls', 'bastard' etc and the latter just heard it without arguing. The journalist was curious and even after many excuses from Animal, he was keen to get his story in particular. Animal even goes to the extent of saying that he is not even a human but the journalist convinced him saying that even animals can tell tales that make a huge difference. Apart from the journalist, the people in Khaufpur also recognize Animal as the true victim of the tragedy. This happens from both those affected and unaffected by the tragedy.

Zafar, who is the leader of the justice movement in the village and who is unaffected by the tragedy, includes Animal as the representative of the victims and presents him in court as a major victim, greatly affected by the tragedy. Similarly, the doctor in the government hospital in Khaufpur says that he had never seen any other victim affected by the tragedy to the extent Animal bears the injuries of the tragedy. Somraj, Huriya bi, Ma Franci are full of pity for Animal. They themselves are also victims of the tragedy but society doesn't consider them as the main victims. They are given a place in society just like normal human beings. They are not treated as animals.

People are full of love, respect and care for these people. On the other hand Animal, who is also a resident of the same village, is treated badly and in an inhumane manner. The following quotes indicate the attitude of the villagers, which clearly indicate the hierarchy of victims created in Khaufpur:

Chunaram introduces Animal to the journalist as:

"Sir, this is Animal. He lives on the streets and eats from garbage. He is a unique case of the gas tragedy with his physical features." (Sinha 7)

Animal's response to Nisha when she scolds him for begging:

“It is not fun to be hungry. No one accepts me and there is no one to look after me. I am an orphan and have to beg for living. No one gives me work because I am an illiterate. Most people just scold me and ask me to fuck off.” (Sinha 19)

The above quotes clearly explain the attitude of the villagers towards Animal in the novel *Animal's People*. The hierarchy of victims occurs not merely on the basis of physical features but also on the basis of education, position held in society, respect, having a proper family etc. Animal, who doesn't have any of these, always fall in the category of a true victim compared with many others who are also victims but never recognized as one among them.

Another categorization of victims occurs in terms of the direct and indirect effects of the tragedy on the victims. Victims who have been directly exposed to the poisonous gas bear the marks of the tragedy and they are victimized throughout their lives. Such victims are called first generation victims. On the other hand, there are also victims who are not directly affected by the tragedy but are indirectly affected by the tragedy. They are called second- generation victims. In spite of being affected indirectly, second- generation victims are also considered direct victims. Such a distinction is clearly visible in the novel *A Breath of Fresh Air* by Amullya Malladi.

The novel *A Breath of Fresh Air* is the story of Anjali, who is the female protagonist and whose life is greatly affected by the Bhopal tragedy. Anjali dreams of getting married and having a proper family life. Thus, when Prakash comes to her life who is a handsome soldier, she accepts him and is impressed by him which leads their marriage. The turning point occurs in her life, when Anjali realises after marriage that Prakash has an ongoing affair with a married woman. The novel begins by recollecting the events of the Bhopal tragedy. In the beginning of the novel, we find Anjali waiting for Prakash in the railway station in Bhopal. Soon she finds

herself amidst chaos and confusions when the explosion at the chemical factory resulted in the spreading of poisonous gas. Many were killed while others were struggling to breathe. Anjali experiences pain while breathing and before she could realise the reality of the situation, she collapses.

Anjali survives the tragedy but marriage with Prakash comes to an end. Throughout the novel, Anjali felt that because of Prakash's ignorance, she was left to die by inhaling the fumes. As a result of the fumes inhaled, Anjali suffers from horrible asthma throughout her life. Her marriage with Prakash thus comes to an end with divorce. The novel then shifts to her story after 15 years, where Anjali is married to Sandeep, who is working as a mathematics professor in Ooty. Their son, Amar is greatly affected by the tragedy as a result of the effects of the gas on Anjali. Thus Amar is physically affected and disabled in the novel.

In this novel Anjali, who is exposed to the poisonous gas, is a direct victim of the tragedy. On the other hand, her son Amar is an indirect victim. He undergoes many serious operations to cure his heart and lungs. Though the surgeries were successful his condition worsened after a few years. Though Amar was not exposed directly to the fumes he still has to carry the aftereffects of the tragedy. Anjali and Amar are isolated from society especially owing to the disability of Amar. Amar's body is weak and he doesn't have the strength to walk, run or do any other things which other boys of his age can easily do. He doesn't go to school and has no friends. He is not even exposed much to the outside world. The neighbors isolate the family because they feel the child is not normal. Anjali's second husband, Sandeep, is caring and loving. Yet, deep inside, he considers Anjali a patient of asthma who needs proper care and treatment. Sandeep never revealed his thoughts regarding her past life with Prakash, and her

experience of escaping death while in Bhopal. However, when she has asthma attacks, he feels a kind of separation from her because it reminds him of her past, especially Prakash. Her asthma attacks remind him that his wife is a victim of the tragedy. The following lines indicate this attitude of Sandeep:

But there was Prakash in the past, and he kept peeping into our lives each time Anjali's body remembered the Bhopal gas tragedy. (Sinha 58)

The following conversation between Sandeep and Anjali also reminds Anjali that she is a victim of the tragedy, especially when she has an asthma attack:

“But you want to choke all the time?” Sandeep asked

“I am not choking all the time”, Anjali protested. “I am fine all the time like others.”

“_____ all the time”, Sandeep finished . “You scare the hell out of me. I can't believe this. All of a sudden you become a person affected.” Her asthma reminds me that she is someone affected and not like other humans. (Sinha 119)

Throughout the novel Amar is also considered a victim of the tragedy. Komal, Amar's aunt, always calls him the ‘sick boy’. Even his own parents, Anjali and Sandeep, consider him a person affected by the tragedy. Anjali always prayed and hoped that like other normal boys, her son would also lead a normal life. Anjali always considered Amar an indirect victim of the tragedy. In the novel, Anjali is never bothered about others considering her as victim of the

tragedy. On the other hand, she is more bothered about Amar as the second generation victim of the Bhopal tragedy. Throughout the novel Anjali tries to reassure herself that Amar is a normal child and that he will lead a normal life. She always felt that her suffering is nothing compared to the pain that Amar experiences. Sandeep, Anjali's parents, Komal, Prakash and Indu considered Amar a sick child and sympathized with him. Anjali detested their attitude towards her child. Thus, in the case of Animal, Anjali and Amar, although they are born as normal human beings they are never considered as part of mainstream society.

The reasons behind this isolation in society can be explained further by using the concepts of Shilling and Turner. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the societies presented in both the novels follow certain rules and regulations regarding what a 'normal' body should be. Members of the societies presented in both novels feel that the physical appearance of the body is one major factor that determines a normal body. Each and every human body must adhere to certain rules regarding shape, fitness, strength etc. Society in Khaufpur can never accept Animal as part of it because his body doesn't adhere to the assumptions of the physical appearance that a normal person should have in Khaufpur. Animal has a twisted spine and walks on all fours. He is thin and his growth is less compared with that of many others of his age. (Animal is 19 years old). He cannot play and walk around on two legs like others. While people make eye contact with others in Khaufpur, Animal stares into someone's crotch. Though he is born a normal human being, he is called Animal mainly because of his appearance. Animal is intelligent and competent like any other person but physical beauty is one major factor that is necessary for social acceptance in Khaufpur. Here the body of Animal contradicts the social conventions of physical beauty and acceptance in the village. Hence he lacks respect and acceptance in the village.

The villagers have different ways of looking at Animal in the novel, especially his body. Ma Franci always talked about how he looked before inhaling the poisonous gas. According to her, Animal was sweet but a naughty beautiful angel. He had beautiful eyes and walked upright. She feels sorry that he has to walk on all fours and be called 'Animal' by the people in Khaufpur. The description of Animal by Chunaram to the journalist is another example to show how body is important the village of Khaufpur:

There he is! It's Animal. Goes on all four, that one. Bent double like a twisted worm. He is an Animal and not a human. (Sinha 13)

When Animal confessed his feelings for Nisha to his friend Farouq, the latter came up with a comparison between Animal and Zafar (whom Nisha adores) that indicates the views on what a normal body should be. Farouq described Zafar as tall and handsome with a beautiful face. He is confident to face anything. Moreover compared to Animal, Farouq states that Zafar walks and moves like a human being. Animal is described as a donkey with a twisted spine that is not fit for a human like Nisha.

In *Animal's People* the society represented constitutes the victims of the tragedy but in *A Breath Of Fresh Air*, the assumptions of a body are made by those affected (Anjali) and not affected (Prakash, Sandeep, Komal etc) by the tragedy. The assumptions of a normal body, and construction of a victim based on these assumptions occur more in the case of Amar in this novel. Amar has many health problems and is completely ill. Anjali always compares her son to the other healthy children who can run, play and go to school. The line, 'Only if his body was normal like the others' (Malladi 12) is like a refrain used by Anjali throughout the novel. In the novel Komal always complain about how Amar is different from other boys and cannot even

hold things properly. She always emphasizes on the fact that Amar is not normal. Though Sandeep loves his son, yet deep inside him, he always feels that his son is different from others. The first and foremost criterion he brings out is the difference in body. Sandeep always accepted the fact that Amar was different. He described Amar as sick and weak. When compared with other boys of his age, Amar is not energetic, fit or strong. Sandeep feels his son's body to be weak and fragile like glass. Prakash also came to a conclusion that Amar is different especially after seeing him in a wheel chair and thus comes to a conclusion that the boy was different.

Thus, the basic conceptions of a normal human body are constructed in both the novels based on the physical features. We also find that the concept of tragedy itself is socially constructed. The way people look at any tragedy changes with personal perspectives. For some people, the Bhopal disaster and its aftereffects becomes a tragedy, while for others the personal loss is more tragic than a mass disaster. Both the novels have enough examples to prove this point. In the novel *Animal's People*, Zafar is not a direct victim of the tragedy yet he works for the upliftment of the victims of the Bhopal tragedy. Animal, however is more concerned about his own disability and always thinks about ways to overcome it. Nisha, for her part, feels sad when Zafar disappeared, and she mourned like a widow thinking that Zafar has been killed by the police while he was heading the protest meeting. On the other hand, in *A Breath of Fresh Air*, Anjali feels that the Bhopal tragedy, especially the effect of the tragedy on her son and her past marriage, is tragic in her life. She always feels that the approaching death of her son is more tragic than anything else in the world. Komal, Anjali's sister-in-law is a widow and feels that the death of her husband and depending upon her brother for the rest of her life is more tragic. Thus the ways people look at tragedy are different for different people. In both the novels we find that

the concepts of normalcy regarding tragedy, as well as human bodies, are constructed by the society presented in the novels.

Another major factor that serves as criteria for creating the categories of victims is disability. Ellen Samuels, in the article 'Theorizing Disability Studies,' published in 2008 defines disability as a "Form of human variation socially constructed" (Samuels 14). The visibility of the disabled as normal human beings doesn't occur owing to the social construction where the body becomes one major factor. Those who live with disabilities are always isolated in families as well as in societies. Disability is one major aftereffect of the Bhopal tragedy on the bodies of those affected resulting in the creation of a victim. The characters Animal in the novel *Animal's People* and Amar in the novel *A Breath of Fresh Air* are examples of those affected people who have been constructed as victims in terms of the disability caused by the Bhopal tragedy.

Animal himself feels disabled when he sees the rest of the people in Khaufpur who can walk on two legs. Being alienated and marginalized for being disabled, he always recollects the time when he used to walk upright. He avoids mirrors and even his own shadow because he doesn't want to see himself as a crippled version of a human being. Thus the construction of disability by the villagers in Khaufpur goes to the extent of something constructed in reverse of what is assumed as a normal human body, which privileges some and oppresses others. Though many other characters in the novel also have such physical aftereffects of the tragedy, they are not visible to the outside world. The perfect examples are Ma Franci, Pandit Somraj etc. They also bear the aftereffects of the tragedy on the body, in the form of lung disease, memory loss, loss of voice etc, yet they are part of the society of Khaufpur. On the other hand, Animal's body with a twisted spine is the most visibly the gruesome one and it literally changes his status as a human. He declares that he doesn't want to be human and doesn't want to recollect how he was

before the disaster. He always becomes angry when Ma Franci talks about how beautiful he looked, the way he walked and jumped about before inhaling the poisonous gas and before his spine became twisted. The name Animal was conferred to him by other kids who teased him on account of his appearance. Thus with his name and acceptance of the identity of an animal, he began to move away from human beings. He isolates himself from the rest of the community and doesn't want to be recognized as a human being. The following words spoken by 'Animal' reflect this attitude:

“My name is Animal. I am not a fucking human being; I have no wish to be one.” (Sinha 23)

Nish says, “It is not what is outside that matters, inside you is a beautiful man.”

Animal says, “I am not a man.” (Sinha 53)

The people in Khaufpur have a clear line of distinction drawn between the normal human beings and the disabled ones. The construction of who a normal human being is, takes place not only in terms of the visible physical evidences but also in terms of the social and cultural factors. A normal human being apart from merely having a normal body also needs factors like education, respect, job and a proper family to be accepted in a society. The process of victimization in terms of disability further leads to victimization in terms of many other factors as seen in the novel. Chris Shilling is of the opinion that the constructions of 'self' and 'other' depends upon the distribution of power, in the world outside. It constitutes of both social and cultural factors. Such relations of power play a very important role in controlling our everyday

lives. Such power structures in terms of job, respect, education and family play a very important role in the society of Khaufpur.

The other victims of the tragedy like Ma Franci, Somraj, Uttamchand etc are educated people. They are refined in their manners as well as civilized. They are always helpful and have no visible signs of transformation on their bodies. Ma France is a nun and always helps the people of Khaufpur and pray for their welfare. Somraj teaches music to children and takes part in the protest for justice. Uttamchand helps poor people. Moreover they have proper families and means of livelihood. Ma Franci lives in a monastery and is a part of a charity organization. Somraj lives with his daughter and earns a living by teaching music. Uttamchand has wife and children and supports his family by running a grocery shop. Sahara, another person affected by the tragedy, does small jobs to support her family consisting of her husband and in-laws. Animal on the other hand, lacks these factors. He is not educated, has no good manners and attitude, doesn't have a family, is more like a wanderer, is greedy, uncivilized and treats everyone badly. He eats from dustbins and sleeps in different places. He uses impolite language and is discourteous to all the people in Khaufpur. He doesn't have a proper job and his family consists of only Jaara, his pet dog. Animal lives in the old abandoned factory and doesn't have a proper house. Often, in the novel, the people of Khaufpur refer to him as a 'cretin', 'twisted little bastard', 'disabled worm' etc. Initially, he was called 'Animal' only because he walked on all fours but later it became a form of barrier created between him and the rest of the 'normal' people in Khaufpur. Efforts were also made by many people in Khaufpur to transform him from an animal to a human in many ways. Nisha tries to civilize Animal by teaching him to read and write, imparting manners and instructing him to talk properly to others, as these are the basic features of a respectable and civilized human being. Similarly, Zafar also tries to impose human

qualities on him by giving him responsibilities, making him his right hand in the revolutionary movement against the company etc. Elli, the doctor from America who came to start a clinic and help the Khaufpurians, trusted Animal and bought him clothes. She also tried to make him more responsible by entrusting him with small chores and giving him food. Ma Franci always told him stories from the Bible about honesty love etc and tried to motivate him. All the characters Nisha, Zafar, Elli, Ma Franci, Somraj etc put great effort in to civilizing Animal and thus making him part of society, because the laws and conditions applicable to be accepted in society are absent in Animal.

In the novel *A Breath of Fresh Air*, Amar is another person who is constructed as a victim of the tragedy, especially by his family members. Amar cannot walk properly nor do anything by himself. He always has to depend upon others to do even his basic chores. He cannot hold heavy things, his fingers fail and mishaps happen. He gets tired after walking for a few minutes and someone has to carry him back home. Throughout the novel, the boy tries to convince his parents (Anjali and Sandeep) that he is a normal boy and they don't have to be sad about him. Amar always tried to do things by himself and refused to hold on to his parents while walking. He doesn't want them to consider him as ill. He fought with himself to do things that twelve-year olds were supposed to do. Amar understood the limitations of his body but struggled to live like a normal boy. Anjali always points out the way he laughed about his illness, while most grownups would have given up.

Although Anjali herself bears the aftereffects of the tragedy, she has greater concern for Amar's disability and illness. Throughout the novel she tries to convince herself that nothing bad will ever happen to him. She always considered him a victim who had to suffer even without being exposed to the gas. At times, Anjali feels that she has committed a mistake by having a

baby because she was unaware that the Bhopal gas tragedy would leave a mark on her womb. She had always wanted a normal and healthy child like any other mother but with Amar she was always hoping that he would become a normal child one day. Anjali always felt that, compared to her son's illness her asthma attack was merely like a common cold. Amar's grandparents also consider Anjali and Amar to be sick. While they always talk highly about their other healthy grandchildren- the way they run about, play, go for walks with their grandparents etc. Anjali's parents are equally concerned about her frequent asthma attacks.

Sandeep on the other hand, had the same attitude as that of Anjali. He felt the longing to save Amar from his body which is one major obstacle preventing his son from leading a normal life. Sandeep wanted a child immediately after marriage but his dreams were shadowed with the birth of Amar. He thought of playing and having fun with the child but with a sick child like Amar this was not possible. Like Anjali, Sandeep also hoped for a miracle to happen to make Amar normal. Thus, physical aftereffects of the tragedy form one main factor for not being accepted in society as a normal human being.

However apart from that on close analysis of the lives of the characters, many other factors also contribute to a clear distinction between disability and normalcy. One major factor is marriage. Indian society always considers a divorcee separate from normal human beings. Anjali is a divorcee and she is always blamed by her parents for getting a divorcee from Prakash. Her parents refused to believe that it was Prakash who had cheated on her, and tried to convince her that it is the duty of a woman to bear everything and move forward without any complaint. Similarly Sandeep also had problems with her past marriage with Prakash. Though he loved Anjali and respected her deep inside, he wondered whether she still had feelings for Prakash. Sandeep's doubtful nature is clear from these lines:

She said she hated him and loved me. I think, but deep down I knew she missed him and her life with him. Prakash was her past and now he was in her present and I am terrified of what might happen. (Malladi 60)

Though Sandeep loves Anjali, he still finds it difficult to accept her past and the sudden appearance of Prakash in her life.

Anjali always felt her marriage to Prakash was a mistake. While Prakash enjoys all the comforts in life and is accepted as a respectable person in society, Anjali is considered as the 'Other' here. Prakash has a proper family life. His remarriage to Indu didn't create any difference in the position enjoyed by him in society. He has healthy children, money and respect. Anjali on the other hand, has a sick and disabled child. She and her husband are fighting to make both ends meet. They are spending all their money to make their child better and trying to reduce expenses. Sandeep also enjoys a very good position in society in terms of respect given by the people. Komal, Anjali's parents and her friends always show respect for Sandeep. However it is Anjali who is always blamed. The following lines of Anjali indicate the alienation faced by Anjali in the society:

It was startling to know that the society I lived in was so fragile and my place in it was contingent on innumerable things like marriage and respect. (Malladi 41)

My parents never approved of the divorcee. They have written me out of the family will. My parents, relatives and my own brother stopped talking to me and considered me an outcast. (Malladi 71)

The construction of what constitutes the 'self' and the 'other' are related to the factors that influence power and position, in this world. The body, as presented in both the novels, is not

merely a physical fact for the individuals but a component which is constantly examined and accepted in society. Thus, body becomes a subject for not only the individual but also an object for others. These relations can both make a person free as well as disturb his lives. Body thus has its own physiological features and is subject to the natural processes of aging and decay. On the other hand, it must meet certain norms and conditions to be followed to be accepted by society. When a specific human body does not adhere to such socially accepted features, divisions and distinctions occur. Such distinctions, beginning with the normalcy of the body, will lead to other factors determining normalcy, such as education, respect, position, wealth etc. In both the novels, based on the factors discussed above, we find that there is a hierarchy of victims created. Many victims who bear the aftereffects of the tragedy are accepted, while others are not accepted. Hence, it is society presented in both the novels that lead to the construction of victim identities as far as Anjali, Amar and Animal are concerned. They are considered different and consequently isolated.

Works Cited

- Christie, Nils. *Criminological Data as a Mirror for Society*. New York. 1973. Plenum Press. Print.
- Davles, Pamela. "Victims and Society". *Information, Communication and Society*. 14.2(2000): 121-125. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 April 2015.
- Lardigo, Lourdes. *Victims and Survivors*. Washington DC. American Psychological Association Publishers. 1995. Print
- Malladi ,Amullya. *A Breath of Fresh Air*. U.S.A. Random House Publishing. 2002.
- Parson, Raldolph Erwin. *Victims of Disaster* . John Hopkins University Press. 2004. Print.
- Samuels, Ellen. "Theorizing Disability Studies". *Contemporary Literature Journal*. 50.3(2009): 629-633. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 March 2015.
- Schilling, Chris. *Changing Bodies*. New York. Sage Publications. 2008. Print.
- Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. U.K. Pocket Books. 2007. Print.
- Stocker, S. Susan. "Disability and Identity: Overcoming Perfection." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 22.2(2001): 154-173. *Springer*. Web. 27 March 2015.
- Sutcliffe, Moira. *Victimology*. Columbus. Ohio State University Press. 1995. Print.
- Turner.S, Bryan. *Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. New York. Sage Publications. 2008. Print.

Van, der Kolk Bessel. "Body Keeps the Score: Memories of Body and Disaster."
.England. Guildford Press. 1996. Print.

Weisaeth, Laus. "The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Body: Disaster and
Body." New York. Viking Adult. 2014. Print

Chapter 3

Construction of Victimhood Leading to Identity Crisis: A Study on Change in Identity

The previous chapter examined the effects of the Bhopal tragedy on the body of the victims and how the physical aftereffects of the Bhopal tragedy lead to the construction of victim. Society presented in both the novels by the authors Amulya Malladi and Indra Sinha, has many norms and conditions for accepting a human being. Body is one major component of acceptance in society. In this modern world, body has great symbolic value, not on the basis of what the body can do but on the basis of how the body looks. It has also become a symbol of status and power. Both the novels talk about the various physical aftereffects of the tragedy through various characters like Animal, Ma Franci, Somraj, Anjali, Amar etc. Though all are victims of tragedy and bear the aftereffects of the tragedy on their bodies, we find that some are privileged while other victims are oppressed. This categorization of victims greatly influences their participation in society and their position in society. Many characters like Somraj, Ma Franci overcome their position as victims and continue their life as survivors. They have respect and position in society. People accept them as part of society and seek their opinion for making decisions in important matters. On the other hand characters like Animal and Anjali are alienated and isolated from society and their victimhood continues even after many years of the actual tragedy.

The bodies of characters like Animal, Amar and Anjali do not adhere to the norms and conditions of the society in terms of the physical features related to shape, strength, beauty etc. Animal and Amar are disabled, while Anjali has asthmatic attacks and often falls a victim of

bodily memories in the form of recollections and reflections. Body thus becomes a subject as well as an object for others in terms of distinguishing ‘self’ from the ‘others’ or in terms of ‘Who we are?’ and ‘Who we are not?’. Such a construction of victimhood further leads to another major psychological aftereffect in the lives of the victims, especially related to their identity. A person’s identity is determined to a great extent by the physical features that he/she possesses. One major emotional aftereffect of the construction of victim as a result of the Bhopal tragedy in both the novels is the identity crisis faced by the victims. This further leads to a change in identity.

The authors Indra Sinha and Amulya Mallady in the novels *Animal’s People* and *Breath of Fresh Air* bring out fictional representations of the Bhopal tragedy through their characters. The experiences of the Bhopal tragedy are fictitiously represented through a sequence of events that are temporally ordered. Narratives are always associated with events of the past or it can also be a present time influenced by the past. Questions such as whether an event has to be real so that it can become a narrative has always created confusion for scholars, especially, regarding the relation between the real event and fictional representations of the event. Herrnstein Smith, in his article ‘Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories’, published in 1980, states that “The relationship between the fictional and the real is in terms of mutual determinism and influence” (Smith 215). Both novels used in this thesis are fictional representations of the Bhopal tragedy that portray certain features of the tragedy as observed by the authors. In both the novels, the authors try to set forth the major aftereffects of the tragedy. One major aftereffect of the tragedy is the physical effects which lead to the construction of victim. Another major aftereffect of the tragedy is the identity crisis faced by the victims as a result of the physical effects of the tragedy on their bodies. Here, the novels are not mere reflections or representations

of the real Bhopal tragedy but fictional representations with a purpose. The purpose here is to portray how the physical aftereffects of the tragedy lead to the construction of victim and how they further affects the identity of the characters like Animal and Anjali.

One's identity is developed over time and cannot be changed easily. The term 'Identity' has a long history attached to it and is derived from the medieval French word 'Identite', meaning sameness. The identity of a person is always taken for granted because it is believed that it is an inherent quality. However, the debates and discussions around this term today assume that, identity is the result of a process as part of interaction with others. The authors present the point of view that the construction of victims, as a result, of the physical effects of the tragedy can seriously disturb the lives of the victims by creating an identity crisis. Sinha's character 'Animal' and Malladi's 'Anjali' are presented in the novels to portray how the Bhopal tragedy and the construction of victim conferred upon them by society, leads to identity crisis and further to a change in identity.

The victims in the novels like Anjali and Animal talk about confusion in their behaviour and their continuous position as victims in the eyes of society adds to this. The authors present them as experiencing many changes in the form of upsetting emotions, loss of trust in the world, frightening memories, confusions, anger, emotional outbursts etc. Both Animal and Anjali sense a change in their lives but they find it difficult to analyze what exactly has happened to them resulting in identity crisis. A person is always judged first in terms of his body, education, family, job, marriage etc. The society presented in both the novels by the authors always makes it a point to define who the victims are, their appearances are and how they live their lives. Thus there is always great pressure from the part of the society on characters like Animal and Anjali to live up to the standards of other people in society. The characters Anjali and Animal have been

considered as victims by society. Throughout the novel, the authors portray them as struggling with themselves as well as society outside that have labelled them as victims. This struggle between the images conferred upon them by society and what they are deep inside, further leads to identity crisis. As a result of the crisis, Anjali and Animal are always preoccupied by questions such as ,‘Who am I?’, ‘What is the role in my life?’, ‘Where do I belong to?’ etc and try to find answers to these questions through careful exploration and intensive analyses of their lives. Malladi and Sinha point out that it is only through self-realization that they finally understand their true identity and accept it in their lives.

This chapter begins by introducing certain definitions, factors and views of theoreticians whose concepts will form the base of analysis as far as Identity is concerned. This is followed by a second section on identity crisis and an examination of the various characters in the novels as well as the reasons that lead to an identity crisis in their lives. The third section of this chapter examines the conflicts between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ identity. The fourth section examines how the evolution of Identity takes place and the various stages involved. The concluding section talks about the final acceptance of the new identities in the lives of the characters.

3.1 Definitions of Identity

Many definitions can be attributed to the term ‘Identity’. Much research has been done on the changing meanings associated with this term. Sartre defined identity as the “Totality of a person’s being, having and doing” (Sartre 145). The sociologist Paula M.L. Moya, in her work *Reclaiming Identity* published in 2001 and Ashmore R in the work, *Sex, Gender and the Individual* share similar views on identity. According to them, identity is the reflection of thoughts, emotions and feelings in a person’s behavior, which leads to the formation of ones own

‘self’. The sociologist Peter J Burke, in his work *A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity* published in 2011, views identity as something which is not inherent or present in one, but greatly influenced by factors like class, family, work etc. He adds that identity is not formed in the abstract but created. Theorists and sociologists like Tajfel, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Wetherell see identity as part of a social group or category. The sociologist Burke points out how internal dynamics within a person influence behavior and thereby identity.

Another version of identity theory is formulated by D.R Heise in his work *Understanding Events: Affects and the Construction of Social Action* published in 1949, gives emphasis on individual as well as cultural influence on the formation of identities. Heise also points out that, identity can never be separated from what happened in the past and what is happening in the present. It is always changing and evolving. People always keep certain elements of identity, as something personal and express certain portions outward. Such an assumption about identity is clearly evident in the work *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World* published in 1996 by the famous critic and writer Madan Sarup. According to him, there are broadly speaking, two models of identity. They are the public and private identity. What the others observe and conclude about us is called our ‘public’ identity and what we feel or think about ourselves especially, our thought process, ideas, beliefs etc. is called our ‘private’ identity” (Sarup14). These conclusions from research work bring out the various definitions and factors related to what constitutes the identity of a person. The above mentioned definitions of ‘Identity’, especially those of Sarup, Burke and Stryker follow the view that it is not something inherent. On the other hand, according to them identity is something constructed by people in society and conferred on a person. However, the definitions of Sartre, Moya and Ashmore define identity as the reflection of oneself

and one's thoughts. Thus, different definitions are attributed both in terms of identity being influenced and constructed by the society outside and identity as the reflection of oneself.

3.2 Identity Crisis

The formation of identity is considered to be an important component in life and is different from the concept of personality. Personality is an attempt to answer the questions related to 'What kind of person are you?', while identity deals with some recognition and awareness from our part and is also constructed by the society in which we live. The characters in both the novels, namely *Animal* and *Anjali* are constructed as victims by society. Many critics have mentioned about the formation of self, reflecting their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and experiences, as the identity of a person. Identity is also influenced by the society in which the character lives, who confers upon them the position of a victim. This, in turn leads to a kind of conflict between the 'self' and the identity constructed by society leading to a situation, that is 'Identity Crisis'.

The concept of 'Identity Crisis' was first put forward by Erik Erikson, a famous psychologist and psychoanalyst, in his famous work, *Dimensions of a New Identity*. He defines identity crisis as "a change or important part in our life when development in our lives, change its path to accommodate, differentiation" (Erikson 23). Such a situation creates a kind of conflict between a person's self and who he/she is supposed to be and may occur when a person faces a challenge or a kind of conflict to the self.

It is always impossible to convey the range and depth of the impact of a man-made disaster like the Bhopal tragedy. In both the novels, the tragedy occurred unexpectedly. The immediate response to a disaster is that of shock, fear and grief. As the immediate shock and

terror dissipates, the aftereffects become dominant. The novel *A Breath of Fresh Air* is all about the life of Anjali. In the novel, Anjali dreams of getting married to a young man and thus lead a happy family life. Thus she accepts Prakash's marriage proposal. Later on Anjali realizes that life is not what she expects it to be. She realizes that Prakash has an extra marital affair with his superior officer's wife. The novel also describes how Prakash leaves Anjali at the railway station on the day he tragedy occurred and how she becomes part of the tragedy. She doesn't die but continues to have serious health issues.

Years later, Anjali is married to Sandeep, a professor and also gives birth to Amar. She now leads the life of a teacher, wife and mother. Anjali is more concerned about the health of Amar rather than anything in her life. She loves Sandeep and tries to be happy in her life. However, the aftereffects of the tragedy still persist in her life and become clearly evident especially when Prakash returns to her life after a span of 15 years. Prakash here becomes a symbol of the tragedy that occurred in her life and his return creates conflicts within herself. Anjali become more preoccupied with the events of the tragedy, especially her life with Prakash. Any activity that she does is swamped by images and thoughts of what happened in their lives. She starts recollecting her moments with Prakash, even when she hates him for the sin committed against her and Amar. An important example of this is the way she reacts when she see Prakash after a long time in the market. Though she doesn't love him she feels confused about her feelings towards him. The following lines of Anjali indicate this confusion. She says:

I couldn't forget what he had done. It didn't matter whether he was sorry but a mild confusion was traipsing through my brain. Do I still love him? (Malladi 14)

Malladi brings out the identity crisis faced by Anjali in the above quote where Anjali cannot forget the sin committed by Prakash. The sin here refers to his negligent attitude of leaving Anjali alone on the day, the disaster strikes Bhopal. She was left to die while he was comfortable in his home. Anjali still bears the aftereffects of inhaling the poisonous gas in the form of asthma. Besides, she also cannot forget about how Amar got affected even though he was not directly exposed to the gas. The coming of Prakash also reminds Anjali about her disturbed marriage life and how she initiated proceedings to get a divorce from him. The society in which she lives alienates and isolates her as she is physically affected by the tragedy and is also a divorcee. Thus she is constructed a victim. Her asthmatic attacks always give her recollections of the day the tragedy occurred. Her husband Sandeep confesses to her that her asthmatic attacks always remind him of her life with Prakash. Such thoughts often create distance between Anjali and Sandeep creating problems in their lives. On the other hand Anjali cannot forget the comforts of the army life which she enjoyed during her life with Prakash. Malladi thus portrays the identity crisis faced by Anjali where she hates as well as has some affection for Prakash. Anjali is also aware that she cannot go back to her old life as, she is another man's wife. Having such feelings itself is a violation of the purity of a woman in Indian society and will further add to her victimization. Thus, the process of victimization leads to identity crisis between the self and one's identity constructed by the society outside. In the novel Anjali becomes confused as a result of the struggle where she tries to be frank with her thoughts but is afraid to do so owing to the society outside.

Throughout the novel, *A Breath of Fresh Air*, we find Anjali thinking about Prakash. She just couldn't stop thinking about her past life. It remains in her mind all the time and can never go out. She enjoys spending time with Amar and Sandeep but, after the coming of Prakash she is

disturbed and has recollections of the tragedy in the form of her old life with Prakash. This remains her main association with the Bhopal tragedy. She never reveals her thoughts regarding Prakash to Sandeep as she always wants to maintain the position of a good and loyal wife. Anjali always knew that she would never forget Prakash but never thought that the meeting would become a threat to her life with Sandeep. She gets disturbed because Prakash is married and there is another woman in her former place. She herself confesses that she has no feelings for Prakash but yet she feels guilty because she wants to see him again and again. Anjali is well aware of the attitude of society. She always tries to be sincere in her love for Sandeep but she also has some feelings for Prakash.

Malladi thus brings out how society plays a very important role in the lives of victims affected by the tragedy. Anjali in the novel is constructed a victim by the society. She bears the aftereffects of the tragedy and doesn't adhere to the norms and conditions of the society. She is a divorcee and the mother of a disabled child. She is from a middle class family and is deprived of her parent's property because she initiated the divorce proceeding against Prakash. Malladi thus portrays how Anjali faces an identity crisis where she is struggling to analyze her 'self' consisting of her thoughts, decisions and opinions about what she is with respect to her position of a victim in the society in which she lives.

The novel *Animal's People* also follows a similar pattern of identity crisis as a result of the Bhopal tragedy. Sinha presents the major source of emotional trauma in the novel as the physical aftereffects of the tragedy, in the form of construction of victim. In the novel, the character of Animal is greatly affected by his position as victim in the society. The name itself symbolizes this in the novel. Though he is born a human being he is called Animal owing to his disability. He is not part of any family and doesn't have the means to provide for himself as he is

illiterate. In the beginning of the novel Animal is always suspicious, rebellious and angry as he is always isolated from the society. Nobody gives any value to him as he doesn't follow the societal norms of a human being especially in his physical appearance. This isolation in terms of his appearance also influences his character and in all ways he adapts to his position of victim as an Animal. Thus he embraces his name Animal and confesses that the name also reflects his identity. The following quotes indicate how Sinha presents Animal in the position of victimhood.

In the novel Animal says:

I am an Animal. That is what I am. I walk on fours and I don't want to be a human being. (Sinha 24)

I don't want to sleep with a roof over my head because I am an Animal and not a normal human being. (Sinha 35)

Animal in the novel doesn't want to be a human being because no one in Khaufpur has ever regarded him with respect for the human being within him. They have always called and considered him an Animal. The words of Animal indicate his refusal to become a human because he knows that society will never accept him as one. He feels that only a human being should have a house, as becoming a part of family and having a place to live is a characteristic of human being. Animal on the other hand, doesn't have a family or a home which is one major reason for his victimhood in society. In the novel, Animal does accept that he is born a human being but not living as one. This is because the acceptance of someone as a human being becomes complete only when a person becomes a part of a group or a community following certain rules and regulations in their lives related to family, income, education, marriage etc. Animal in Khaufpur

doesn't belong to any such group because he is not considered worthy enough to follow such rules and regulations.

The identity crisis in Animal's life begins after becoming a part of the company of activists led by Zafar to fight for justice. Sinha presents Animal as someone who always moved away from others. He always maintains a distance from people because he knows that he is not considered one among them owing to his position of a victim in society. Slowly his thoughts and attitude begins to change after coming in contact with characters like Zafar, Nisha, Elli Barbar, Somraj etc. He begins to show the characteristics of a human being. He starts helping other people and tries to talk politely to them. He allows Nisha to teach him to read and write and always made it a point to follow her instructions. He starts experiencing the happiness of a family and adores Nisha. Though he hates Zafar because Nisha adores him, Animal finds it difficult not to respect or follow his orders. He considers 'Zafar Bhai' as highly knowledgeable and intelligent and one who has devoted his life to serve the poor victims of the tragedy. Yet, at many points we find Sinha portraying the identity crisis faced by Animal through his animal instincts which came to him after being treated badly by society for many years. The animal instinct within him urged him to kill Zafar by poisoning but he becomes confused at the last moment and changes his decision, because he understands that his happiness is related to Nisha and she is happy only when Zafar is alive and not dead. Animal thus begins to think about the community and not about himself which is a turning point in his life. He gets beaten up while attending a hunger strike to rescue Nisha and her father. He also supports Zafar's activities and starts helping all those affected by the tragedy. He also sacrifices his own life for Zafar, Nisha and all the victims of Khaufpur by demanding justice and arguing against the lawyer of the 'Kampani' even when he was brutally beaten up by the police.

The article “Evolution of Identity” by Conger, published in 1964 also brings out certain aspects of identity crisis. According to Conger, one major component of identity crisis is the search for oneself. Those people facing an identity crisis as a result of a disaster always try to compare their ‘old self’, (what they were before) to what they are at present; thus trying to reconcile both. There occurs a process of comparison of the past with the present. This in turn leads to an active search for meanings of the events on the part of the victim. Questions like ‘Why me?’ or ‘Why now?’ become prominent.

Malladi presents Anjlai as always preoccupied by such questions. Whenever she has thoughts about Prakash she feels she is isolated from her family and her own self. She loves her husband Sandeep and is thankful that she is not married to Prakash, which is the reality. However, deep inside she is still confused because she wants to be someone else and wants to have all the pleasures in life like she did when she was twenty-one. She finds herself comparing her past with the present. Such dilemmas and confusions often confronted her with many questions for which she is in search of an answer in the novel. The following quotes indicate the dilemmas of Anjali:

I was jealous of Prakash’s wife. It was envy, pure and simple. I was supposed to be an army officer’s wife. Suddenly, I remembered Sandeep and Amar. I just can’t understand why such thoughts occur to me? (Malladi 65)

Prakash looked perfect for me. He was my past and now he is becoming my present. I miss my life with him but I am happy with Sandeep. The thoughts keep pouring to my mind without an end. Why am I always tormented by my past? (Malladi 85)

Anjali here recollects her old self. She was carefree, beautiful and simple. Anjali enjoyed her life with Prakash and misses that life. Anjali thus is plagued by questions as to why she is in such a dilemma. The quotes indicate her yearning to return to her old identity of a carefree woman, enjoying the position of an army man's wife. On the other hand, she tries to cope with her identity as Sandeep's wife. Malladi presents the struggles faced by her protagonist, while trying to bring about a kind of reconciliation between her past and present. In Anjal's struggle to bring about such a union, she is faced by many questions because she wants to maintain her own self-identity as well as adopt the identity conferred upon her by society as a victim. This results in her dilemma and confusion.

Similarly, Animal's life is also preoccupied by such questions, especially after coming in contact with Zafar and Nisha. Before his involvement in the fight for justice he considered himself to be an Animal but after coming in contact with them, Animal wonders confusedly whether he is an animal or a human being. In the beginning, he detests being considered a human because of the way society considers him as a victim but later, without his knowledge, he become preoccupied with confusion and conflict regarding his identity. He begins to feel that he is not the same person whom he was in the beginning, especially when he thinks about his past along with his present. The following quotes of Animal indicate this point:

I don't walk on two legs like most people but I do have talents and skills like any other human being as told by Zafarbai. He said I am a human being , entitled to dignity and respect. But my name is Animal. I am not human. Let me be as I am. Why do I want to become human? (Sinha 25)

Why am I helping those people in the village when they have always isolated me?

Why can't I be the old rude and dirty Animal anymore? The answer is difficult to find. (Sinha 135)

Sinha presents the identity crisis faced by Animal through the above quotes of Animal. We find Animal trying to analyze himself through these words. In the novel, Sinha talks about how society has brought out a clear distinction as to who is an animal and who is a human being. When Animal says he doesn't walk on two legs that itself indicates the way people look at him, especially his physical features. After becoming a part of the struggle for justice Animal starts analyzing his talents and skills. He feels that he also possesses some talents like a human being in the form of helping others and becoming a part of a social movement. At the same time, Animal also thinks that the same society for which he is working has alienated him for many years. Animal recollects the way people were rude to him and always treated him badly. He tries to analyze why he is acting differently than before to those who treated him badly. The quotes also indicate his desire to go back to being an Animal because accepting a new identity for him is difficult. He is always aware of the other side of society that categorise people in terms of their physical features.

Sinha thus brings out a major issue of how the construction of victim by society plays an important role in the life of Animal. He cannot understand himself and the human qualities inside him. It goes to such an extent that even when he tries to analyze himself as a human being in the present, his past experiences of being victimized by the people in Khaufpur restrict him from accepting that identity.

Another characteristic feature of identity crisis put forward by Sinha and Malladi is the loss of trust in oneself as a result of the conflict between the components of self and society influencing the identity of a victim. Throughout the novel, Anjali feels such insecurity especially after the coming of Prakash and her confused feelings towards him. Though her relationship with Prakash came to an end years ago, yet she seems to be caught in that part of her life where Prakash existed. It is more like history repeating itself. Prakash is there once again and she is not sure what she feels for him. Her thoughts about Prakash make her lose trust in herself and she feels that she is moving away from her true family, consisting of Sandeep and Amar. Anjali tries to find out why she is still obsessed with Prakash. Sandeep is everything for her and she loves him. Though she tries to convince herself that she hates Prakash and does not feel any warmth for him, yet she misses life with him. Thus, Anjali tries hard to trust herself and not to lose trust in her life with Sandeep though she cannot forget Prakash.

Animal also has such thoughts where the identity crisis faced by him makes him lose trust in himself. In the beginning of the novel, the journalist requests Animal to tell his story as he finds his story to be a true and special story of a human being affected by the tragedy. Animal, however doesn't feel there is anything special about him and refuses to oblige the journalist. He makes it very clear that he is not a trustworthy person and he is not a human to tell stories. He states, that he is not even a human being but a small person, a tiny creature who distrusts himself and the world outside. He further states that his story, the story of a person with a twisted spine can never bring about any change in the outside world. Though he wants to tell his story, the confusion in his mind as to whether he is a human or an animal makes him lose self trust in him. The following words of Animal are indicative of his loss of trust in himself:

Jarnalis, I'm a hard bastard. I hide my feeling. Ask people they will tell you I'm the same as ever. I want to tell my story but I am not a human. (Sinha 45)

Animal feels that only the stories of human beings have the authenticity and power to influence people. In the novel Animal really wants to share his experience but feels that he has neither the authority nor the power to bring about change in the lives of others through his stories.

Similarly, when Zafar gives him a job to deliver money, Animal asks himself whether he is trustworthy to do such jobs, as all have considered him as Animal and the only job given to him was scavenging on the streets for rags, tins, plastic etc. Animal further adds that he is an animal and can't do much. Thus all these instances tell about how Animal has lost trust in him because of the identity crisis faced by him. The following quote is indicative of this:

I was amazed that Zafar trusted me but I was doubtful.

'You trust me? I could run away'

'It's you who must learn to trust', said he. (Sinha 40)

Another major incident is when Farouq scolds him for teasing religious practices. Farouq advises him to believe in God as he is a human being. Animal becomes angry and asks Farouq when jungle people like him started believing in God. According to Animal his religion involves eating, drinking, shitting, fucking etc. Farouq disposes of Animal's reasoning by advising him to trust in God inside him, by trusting the human being inside him.

Sinha thus portrays the way people look at a disabled character like Animal. He presents Animal as the one picking rags and not trusted to do any jobs. Nobody in Khaufpur has ever

given Animal any good job. Sinha presents the plight of Animal, when the boy has to sell his own blood to dealers from blood banks, as he has no money to buy food and no one in Khaufpur is ready to give him work. Thus, the author brings out the adverse effects of the tragedy on the identity of Animal to such an extent that even the boy himself feels he is untrustworthy and is not capable of doing any jobs other than rag picking and eating from garbage bins.

Sinha and Malladi thus present the issue of identity crisis as one major aftereffect of the Bhopal tragedy caused by the victimhood experienced by Animal and Anjali. This section on Identity Crisis examines how crisis occur as far as Animal's self and Anjali's self are concerned. Though they have their own opinions, wishes and thoughts, they do not have the freedom to completely analyse or understand their self, owing to the pressure from the society around them. The characters find themselves confused and in a state of dilemma. They yearn to go back to their past but always experience a pull from society, which makes them root themselves in the present. Thus, they find it difficult to analyze what they actually want and what is happening to them. Both the authors have clearly portrayed the role played by the society in the life of a human being in terms of the construction of a social identity apart from the personal identity of a person. Identity crisis occurs when a conflict arises between both.

3.3 Public and Personal Identity

The section on Identity Crisis talks about the ways in which the characters in the novels face dilemmas and confusion owing to the conflict between who they are and what others assume about them, in terms of outside society. The above section examines in detail the various methods in which identity crisis occurs in the live of Anjali and Animal. The authors, through the novels put forward various instances to show how the construction of victim based on the

societal norms create an image of Anjali and Animal and how they try to compare this image with their own selves. Thus, it can be concluded that the major factor that adds to the identity crisis of the victims is the role played by society in their lives. Madan Sarup in his work *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*, published in 1996, is of the opinion that identity basically is a kind of interface between the personal and the social. It consists of what an individual feels about himself as well as the social factors. According to Sarup, each and every person has two major components in their identity namely their ‘personal’ identity and their ‘public’ identity. Sarup defines these as follows:

Personal identity is how we see ourselves while public identity is how others judge us or observe us. (Sarup 14)

In both the novels, the authors present the protagonists facing an identity crisis owing to the conflict or confusion in terms of the personal identity and the public identity. Sarup states that the judgment and analysis of our identity from the social point of view greatly influence our lives, especially the way we look ourselves. Anjali and Animal have both personal as well as socially constructed public identities. The main factors that add to such judgments on one’s identity involves family, job, marriage, economic and financial factors.

In the novel *A Breath of Fresh Air*, there are many instances to indicate the social construction of Anjali’s identity (public identity). On the other hand, the novel also presents the conflicts that Anjali faces in her life when she cannot maintain a balance between her personal and public identity leading to identity crisis. The novel begins with Anjali recollecting her experiences of the day the Bhopal tragedy occurred and how she narrowly escaped death. The novel further portrays her life 15 years after the tragic incident. By that time, Anjali had divorced

Prakash, was alienated from her family, had married Sandeep, given birth to Amar and settled in Ooty. The picture of Anjali as presented in the novel is that of a typical middle-aged woman who works for her family and is concerned about her sick child. The fact that she is a divorcee is known only to her husband Sandeep, her sister-in-law Komal and her parents.

People within her family are representatives of the society outside, who try to create an image of Anjali with respect to the norms and conditions of the society. Sandeep loves Anjali and trusts her. He is aware of her past and accepts her whole heartedly. He always creates an impression to her that the return of Prakash, is not a problem for him and does not bother him. However, in many parts of the novel, Sandeep describes his discomfort about Anjali's change in behaviour with the return of Prakash. Sandeep wants Anjali to forget about her past and live in the present with him, which is a typical attitude of any husband. He never expresses his thoughts to her but his own monologues in the novel bring out clearly what he expects from Anjali. Sandeep never understands why Anjali is still obsessed with Prakash even after their divorce. He wants her to be completely loyal to him. Sandeep understands that Anjali still misses her life with Prakash and such thoughts of her about her ex-husband trigger disturbance in his mind as he considers it a black mark for a wife in Indian society. Sandeep, in the novel, is able to see how Anjali appears more agitated and stressed and somehow more happy with the return of Prakash. He feels that she has been waiting for such a day and talks about the twinkle in her eyes at the name of Prakash. Sandeep confesses in his monologue that what actually makes Anjali happy is hurting him deep inside. He had always wanted to marry a simple yet well-mannered Indian girl but got married to a divorcee. Though Sandeep never states this, his dialogues in the novel are indicative of how he tries to compare Anjali with a typical Indian wife. The following words of Sandeep are indicative of this:

Anjali had loved Prakash once, deeply and I was tortured always that my wife belonged to someone in her past. (Malladi 58)

At times I feel she is not the right one for me, especially after the coming of Prakash. She is moving away from the ideal Anjali I had earlier. I was tormented. She would leave me before she cheated on me and I worry that she would do both. (Malladi 60)

Sandeep always talks about honesty and emphasizes how Anjali was honest in the past. However, after the coming of Prakash he doubts her. He tries to convince himself that they love each other and that she takes her marriage vows just as seriously as he takes his. However, there was always Prakash in the past and he kept peeping into their lives each time Anjali sees him or his wife outside. Sandeep always feels a kind of inferiority when compared to Prakash.

In the novel Sandeep is irritated by the fact that Anjali always compares her life at present with the colourful life with Prakash in her past. For a married woman like Anjali, she is more attracted to such demigod like figures (Prakash) and the lives they led rather than her life with Sandeep. Anjali's change in behaviour agitates Sandeep and he starts having 'small, inconsequential, almost unthinkable doubts' (68) about Anjali. Anjali's divorce is always a matter of surprise for Sandeep. When he met Anjali for the very first time he was curious to know about her life. When she confessed that she was a divorce, Sandeep had mixed feelings for her. According to Sandeep divorcee is something that never happens in a country like India. He feels that divorces can happen in movies, in the lives of celebrities like film stars and with people who are rich. On the other hand, there is no place for divorce in the lives of middle class people. Our society has always developed a negative attitude towards divorced people. Sandeep, though

he never admits it but deep inside also represents a typical Indian, who has a negative attitude towards a divorce. In the novel, his love for Anjali is true and pure but is always disturbed by his assumptions about a woman in society. The thought of his wife being touched, kissed and loved by someone else creates disturbance in his mind and Anjali's confused thoughts about Prakash add to this attitude of Sandeep. Sandeep wants his wife Anjali to forget about Prakash and become a dedicated and loyal wife to him only.

Apart from Sandeep, Komal also has such assumptions about women in society. She is against the concept of women working after marriage and makes it a point to always blame Anjali that she doesn't have enough time to look after Amar. Komal also talks rudely to Anjali and enquires why Prakash came to see her in her school. She always makes it clear that she is never interested by the fact that her brother has married a divorcee. As for Komal, she is always suspicious of Anjali and like Sandeep feels that a woman should have many values and getting a divorce is one major violation of those values. Komal strongly believes that, a woman who has herself decided to divorce her husband can never lead a happy life. Just like Komal, Anjali's parents also support the view that a girl should suffer silently and should never go in for a divorce. When her parents came to meet Amar and accidentally came across Prakash, they apologize again in front of Sandeep for the mistake committed by their daughter. The social point of view of Sandeep, Komal and Anjal's parents are all the same. In her school also Anjali becomes the subject of talk among the teachers when an anonymous man comes and talks to her. Though they all love her, they can never accept her divorce and her encounters as well as conversations with Prakash after divorcing him. Thus, there is a construction of a public identity from the observer's point of view with respect to the norms and conditions in society.

The Indian society is always against a divorced woman. An encounter with a man from her past is also considered a sin in society. Malladi presents the character of Anjali within such restrictions of the society where Anjali is trying to analyze her feelings for Prakash. The strict norms and conditions woven around a re-married woman make Anjali's life miserable to such an extent that she doesn't even recognize what she wants and what she wants to forget.

Animal, in *Animal's People* is also greatly criticized and judged by the people in Khaupur that adds to his identity crisis faced in the novel. The first and foremost judgment is based on his physical appearance. The way the people in Khaupur look at his disability and how the construction of victim takes place is examined in detail as part of this research in the previous chapter. Animal is always considered the 'other' because of his disability. The judgment of the people in society is based on the societal norms of what a human being should possess in terms of body first. Appearance is the first major category for isolation in the life of Animal. Another major reason is the lack of proper family structure. Animal is an orphan and doesn't have a proper family. A person without a proper lineage or a person without parents or no one to claim as family is considered an orphan in society. Instead of making such people comfortable and giving them some importance as human being, society always has a kind of negative attitude towards them. Animal is treated badly because there is no one he can claim as parents to protect him or take care of him. He is illiterate and uneducated. He wanders all around the place and eats from dustbins. Thus, in all matters Sinha presents the way society constructs the image of victim on a disabled orphaned boy affected by the tragedy. Thus, the social construction of his identity occurs in terms of an Animal, based on his physical disability, family, education, job etc.

Both the novels give instances to show how the authors examine the way society plays a very important role in the lives of Animal and Anjali, victims of identity crisis as a result of the

aftereffects of the Bhopal tragedy. Questions like ‘Why can’t I forget the past? Why am I becoming like this?’ continue to disturb them. The social intervention in Anjali’s life in the form of Komal and especially Sandeep, add to her confusion. In many parts of the novel, we find Anjali trying to understand her feelings for Prakash and struggling hard to maintain her relationship with Sandeep without hurting him. She becomes really apologetic about her behaviour and tries to forget Prakash. However, she feels that there is some element in her mind associated with Prakash that still remains unsolved and which creates problems in her life with Sandeep. Animal also experiences similar feelings. He wants to maintain his life as an Animal, but he feels some blankness in his mind to completely accept his identity as an Animal and not a human being. Thus, the conflict between the public and private identity forms the major factor for identity crisis in the lives of Animal and Anjali.

3.4 Phases of Identity and Process of Identification

Sarup is of the opinion that there are two components as far as identity is concerned, namely the private and public identity. The private identity is about what a person conceives about himself/herself while the public identity is what society observes and constructs about a person from outside. Identity crisis, as portrayed by Malladi and Sinha, occurs as a result of the clash or conflict that arises between these two components of identity. In both the novels, the victims of identity crisis, Animal and Anjali are not struggling to analyze the element that is absent which can bring a solution to the crisis faced by them.

Identity is basically a kind of process. It is not something that we find or have once and for all. Russell R. Dynes, in his article “Response to Social Crisis and Identity in the aftermath of a Disaster” is of the opinion that, confusions and conflict in identity occurs when a person finds

something absent or some void space inside him/her. The search for the element that is absent in the lives of the victims occur in three different phases. The article by Dyne gives emphasis to the ideas of A.H Barton, a scientist and psychoanalyst. The article begins by saying that when disaster strikes, whether it is natural or man-made, it is more like an event or process that affect many aspects of the lives of the individual. Dyne describes change in identity as a form of behavioural response after the disaster.

Dyne extends this concept and describes the different levels at which this change in identity takes place among the victims of the disaster. Initially, at the time of the disaster, the victims respond instantly to the sights and sounds of the event. They are full of shock and disbelief as to what has happened because the disaster strikes in an unexpected manner. Their hearts pound, mouths go dry, muscles tense and they feel intense anxiety or fear or terror. This is what he describes as the 'First Disaster Phase'. The physical effects of the tragedy at the time of the disaster are described by both the characters in the form of their memories. Anjali became aware of the poisonous gas for the very first time when she inhaled it at the Bhopal railway station. She tried to breathe but found her efforts in vain as she clasped her throat out of the intense pain. Her eyes became watery and started burning. She could hear sounds and cries everywhere. She was in utter shock and disbelief as to what has happened.

The novel *Animal's People* also talks about the 'First Disaster Phase' in the life of Animal. Animal was young when the Bhopal tragedy took place in Khaufpur. He talks about the sounds and confusions that occurred on that day. He saw people coughing, frothing and went nearly blind. His eyes resembled the slits of snakes as he found it difficult to open them. Thus, both Anjali and Animal give details about their first exposure to the poisonous gas and the memories associated with it.

As the initial shock disappears, the aftereffects become prominent. The disaster destroys and questions the basic thoughts and attitude of the people regarding security, societal help and equality. Before the disaster, the victims had believed that their personal world was safe and meaningful. They had great trust in themselves and in other people. Disaster destroys all these beliefs. Soon the victims become aware of their problems and crisis. They despair in their inability to make decisions. The loss of their trust, of a sense of safety, physical injuries etc, instills in them thoughts of alienation, loneliness etc. In this phase, the victims are disturbed by all the time. This stage is called the 'Impact Stage' or the 'Second Disaster'. All the major characteristic features as discussed in this chapter associated with identity crisis comes in this category.

It is in the last phase, called the 'Reconstruction Stage', that victims come to terms with their lives and attempts to solve their problems related to grief, security, loss, loneliness etc.. Malladi and Sinha present this act of coming to terms with one's identity, in association with the process of identification. People are never born with an identity. We get an identity when we identify one. In both the novels, the characters Animal and Anjali finally analyse the gap between their public and private identity through a unique process of realization, where they finally analyze themselves as having subjective identities. This recognition occurs in terms of an emotional realization as far as Anjali is concerned. On the other hand in *Animal's People*, Sinha presents the self-realization of Animal in terms of his act of identifying with the other victims in Khaufpur.

As far as the novel, *A Breath of Fresh Air* is concerned, the realization of what Prakash meant to her occurs when Sandeep discloses his feelings for her and Anjali's realizes his true love for her. We find Anjali in a kind of emotional chaos where she seems to be slipping away

into a void. She is torn between her hate for Prakash and her reluctance to admit that what she might be feeling might not be hate. Maybe she has forgiven him for his past sins or maybe she still loves him as he was the first man in her life. However, the final realization in the form of identification for Anjali occurs in her conversation with Indira, Prakash's wife. Indira and Anjali share a small conversation in the market about the day the tragedy took place and the negligence of Prakash. Anjali finds the tragedy happening again in the form of recollections and reflections, especially a kind of suffocation, a mixture of sounds in her mind etc. Towards the end of the conversation, Indira apologizes for what Prakash had done to Anjali that is, his betrayal and his negligence. Anjali feels convinced and realizes that she has always hated Prakash deep inside but the realization came late. The following words indicate her transformation:

A weight was lifted from my shoulders. No, I didn't want a life with him. I didn't want her life. I hadn't wanted her life even when I had it. I didn't want to be with a man I needed to apologize for. (Malladi 175)

Anjali finally recognizes her feelings for Prakash as hatred. In the above conversation, Malladi presents Anjali going through an emotional recalling of the tragedy. She has recollections and reflections of the tragedy during her conversation with Indira. Though she cries, she finally understands her feeling for Prakash. She accepts that she has always hated Prakash for being negligent, for forgetting about her on the night the tragedy occurred. She analyses her anger towards him for making her and Amar suffer for his negligence. She also analyses how he had hurt her feelings as a woman when he continued having a relationship with his superior's wife even after marrying her.

Her conversation with Sandeep regarding her feelings for Prakash also brings light, the process of self realization. Anjali confesses that she is glad now that she had divorced Prakash. Malladi brings out the confusion in Anjali's mind, especially caused by the intervention of societal norms in her life. Throughout her life she felt doubtful, especially when her parents and many others blamed her for taking a hasty decision. Influenced by them, Anjali, confessed that she too felt at times that the gas tragedy and her near experience of death forced her to divorce him immediately. Just like she blamed Prakash for the fate of their marriage, at times deep inside Anjali also blamed herself to some extent, wondering if the people around her were right. If she had persevered and stayed with Prakash would her marriage have worked? People always surrounded her with doubts and blamed her for her past, and she too felt them justifiable to a great extent. On the other hand, her life with Sandeep changed everything. His love is true and genuine compared to that of Prakash. Anjali also adds that, like Indira, she doesn't want to apologize to another woman for the misdeed committed by Prakash. The following words indicate her acceptance of her transformed identity:

I knew it was there in me. Now I feel the enlightenment that had been bestowed upon me. I have always hated Prakash for what he had done to me and my son. I never wanted to be his wife and apologize for him. I find a light inside me.
(Malladi 179)

Malladi thus presents Anjali as a strong woman, who solves the doubts and dilemmas that arise in her life after being considered a victim. Anjali, before the process of self-realization, always blamed herself deep inside for initiating a divorce. On one hand she had felt that her decision to divorce Prakash was right. However, on the other hand, she was blamed by those around her including her parents for divorcing him. Thus there occurs a conflict between her

public and private identity. However, she finally realizes that she has always hated him and thus embraces her new transformed identity where she is confident about her decision and overcomes the way people look at her. She understands herself and what she needs. Though she had confused feelings regarding her longing for former comforts, she finally realizes that she cannot completely accept it. The wound made by Prakash still remains inside her, especially the way Amar is affected without even directly being a part of the tragedy. Only because of Prakash and his deed did Amar become sick and finally get hospitalized. Thus Anjali realizes her true identity.

In *Animal's People*, the final realization for Animal occurs in the form of identifying himself with those affected by the tragedy. The final realization of his identity as a human being begins when he sees the small girl Aliya suffering from fever and dying in front of him. Her death made him cry for the very first time in his life. He wonders why he is trying to control his sobs and lets them go in the form of tears. An animal will never have such emotions to cry at the death of a dear one. This is the first incident in the transformation of Animal, who is constructed by society as selfish, rude and cruel. Animal understands for the very first time the pain of separation from a loved one. He gets beaten up by the police when the protest group leads a march to the court about the missing of Zafar. He also sacrifices his own life for Zafar, Nisha and all the victims of Khaufpur by demanding justice and arguing against the lawyer of the 'Kampani', even when he is brutally beaten up by the police. The identity crisis faced by Animal becomes evident in his monologue when he leaves Khaufpur and goes to the forest, because Nisha rejected his proposal.

After being rejected by Nisha, Animal feels that he doesn't want to lead the life of a human being. He goes to the forest and removes his clothes to become naked like other animals.

He feels that he is alone and all those whom he had loved had gone. Nisha doesn't want face Animal and he is not aware whether Zafar is alive or not after being arrested by the police, Ma Franci is also missing. He decided not to go back and plans to die in the forest. In the forest Animal lives for three days without food and water. During this time he goes back down his memory lane and feels guilty for all his mistakes and sins committed in his life. Animal faces death again in the forest without food and water along with high temperature and cold. He begins to have hallucinations of the day the gas tragedy happened and begins to experience difficulties in breathing and a pain in his spine. He hears voices in his head and starts imaginary conversations with the 'Kha-in-the jar' and the animals in the forest. In the forest he finds himself talking to the different animals, which are hallucinations that Animal experiences as result of his fever. He imagines a cobra and datura coming out of his body and warning him about his death. He imagines all the animals dancing without him and he requests them to make him also part of the dance. However, the animals deny his request by saying that he doesn't belong with them. They tell him to lie there and die as they are not his friends.

Animal's realization of the human being inside him occurs when he imagines himself talking to a lizard in the forest. He metaphorically represents hunger as a beast and refers to it as his 'lifelong enemy' (345). To cure hunger, Animal gets hold of a lizard by flinging a stone at the creature. The lizard requests, Animal to let it go. Animal was holding the lizard in his hand and was thinking of ways to kill it, but something in his mind prevents him from doing so. He tries to tell himself to bite its head off and tear it and eat it, just like an animal. However, he can't and release the lizard. The following words of the lizard create a spark in him:

A broken rib may mend, but your nature you can never change. You are a human;
if you were an animal you would have eaten me. (Sinha 346)

Thus Animal realizes the human nature inside him. He feels guilty for trying to poison Zafar and for all the sins committed in his life. He understands why he helped Nisha and others in their fight for justice because he always had a human inside him but realized it late. Towards the end of the novel, Animal is rescued by Zafar who comes to know about the heroic act of Animal and the humanity residing within him. Zafar says:

Animal, I swear I will never be rotten to you again. Animal, my brother, you are a human being. A full and true human being. (Sinha 364)

Animal thus realizes his human nature and decides to face the difficulties ahead of him in his life. He plays an important role in activities to help those people affected in Khaufpur. Thus he attempts to overcome the disaster by helping others and becoming part of the community. He accepts himself as a human with the name and features of an animal. Thus he describes himself as an Animal who is free and ferocious. He adds by saying that there is none like him having such unique characteristics, of being called an Animal but born a human being, in the entire world.

Sinha portrays the process of self-realization of Animal through his monologues. The conversation that Animal has with the Kha-in-the jar helps him to ally himself with the other victims of the tragedy in Khaufpur. He realizes his human nature when he decides not to kill the lizard and eat to overcome his hunger. His realization comes when he is left alone to face death in the forest for three days without food and water. Though he calls himself an Animal which belongs to the jungle, throughout the monologue we find Animal missing the people in Khaufpur. He recollects time he spent together with Ma Franci, Zafar, Nisha, Jaara and Somraj. Animal cannot forget the death of Aaliya and cries in the forest thinking about her. He also recollects his involvement in the struggle for justice which gave way to many changes in his life.

He finally realizes that his fight for justice along with the people affected by the tragedy gave him satisfaction in his life. In the forest, he decides to be a part of the struggle to attain justice and makes it an aim in his life. For him recognition comes both in terms of an emotional realization as well as his identification with those affected by the tragedy. He calls himself as a unique Animal who is named Animal but a human being in all aspects. His decision to fight for justice along with others makes him human.

Sinha and Malladi thus portray the lives of two major victims affected by the Bhopal tragedy through their novels. The authors use the genre of novel as a medium to express the experiences of the Bhopal tragedy in detail. The main components portrayed in the novels are the aftereffects of the tragedy. Sinha and Malladi, through the lives of Anjali and Animal examine how body becomes one major component in society. The society in which a person lives always has many norms and conditions regarding who a normal human being is. The first criterion is the physical features and the appearance. Other factors like family, marriage, education, financial and economic factors also form a base for the way society observes a person and thus comes to a conclusion about him/her. In both the novels Anjali and Animal are not accepted by society. Animal is disabled and his physical appearance doesn't adhere to the aspects of a normal human being. Animal walks on all fours with a twisted spine. He is alone after losing his parents on the day of the tragedy. He wanders like an Animal from one place to another and eats from dustbins. Being isolated from society, he doesn't have any feelings of affection towards anyone. Anjali too bears the aftereffects of the tragedy on her body and is also a divorcee. Thus she also doesn't adhere to the norms and conditions of an Indian woman who is expected to make marriage a priority. Based on these factors, Sinha and Malladi present the social construction of the identity of a person.

Our identities are insecure and we ourselves might become uncertain about them. They are fragile and unstable. Our identities are never finished products. Identity formation is a continuous process and is not born with us. In both the novels, the protagonists, who are victims of the Bhopal tragedy, face identity crisis as a result of the conflict between who they are and how society constructs them. The protagonists Anjali and Animal face serious issues of identity crisis in the form of confusion, dilemmas, loss of trust and the struggle between their private and public identities. However towards the end of the novel, we find each character embracing a transformed identity that occurs through three different phases which leads to a process of self-recognition. Malladi and Sinha thus narrates the Bhopal tragedy with a purpose of examining how the aftereffects of the tragedy lead to the construction of a victim which in turn becomes one major reason for identity crisis.

Works Cited

- . Becker, Steven. M. *"Psychosocial Assistance after Environmental Accidents: A Policy Perspective"*. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 105.6 (1997): 1557-1563. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 September 2014.
- Burke, J. Peter. *A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity*. New York. Guilford Press. 2011. Print.
- Conger, J John. "The Evolution of Identity". *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*. 42.4 (1964): 36-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 September 2014.
- Companion, Michael. *Disaster's Impact on Culture and Survival*. CRC Press. New York. 2015. Print.
- Dynes, R Russell. "Response to Social Crisis and Disaster." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 15.3. 9 (1977): 23-49. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Erikson, Eric. *Dimensions of a New Identity*. New York. Norton Publications. 1979. Print.

Heise, D.R.. *Understanding Events: Affects and the Construction of Social Action*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1949. Print

Malladi ,Amullya. *A Breath of Fresh Air*. U.S.A. Random House Publishing. 2002.

Moya, M.L. *Reclaiming Identity*. Hyderabad. Orient Longman Publishers. 2001. Print.

Sarup, Madan. *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press. 1996. Print

Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. U.K. Pocket Books. 2007. Print.

Smith, Hernstein. "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories". *Critical Inquiry*. 7.1 (1980): 213-217.

Stryker. S. *Identity, Self and Social Movement*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press. 2000. Print.

Woodward, Kath. *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*. New York. Routledge Publishers. 2004. Print

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Transformation of Identity and Empowerment of Victims

This thesis examines in detail in the previous chapters how victimhood is socially constructed, based on the physical effects of the tragedy in the novels *Animal's People* and *A Breath of Fresh Air*. This is followed by an analysis of how the construction of the identity of a victim leads to an identity crisis, resulting in transformed identities in the lives of the victims. Thus, Sinha and Malladi through their novels have presented through fiction the main aftereffects of the Bhopal tragedy. Based on the observations from the previous chapters it can be concluded that the acceptance of a transformed identity as a result of identity crisis, stimulated by the social construction of victimhood, ultimately leads to the empowerment of victims in the novels. The main aim of this chapter entitled “Transformation of Identity and Empowerment of Victims” is to examine how empowerment takes place in the lives of the victims. The meaning

associated with the term 'Empowerment' is conditional. The word empowerment here indicates the social empowerment of the victims rather than their individual empowerment.

Sinha and Malladi present fictional representations of the Bhopal tragedy in the novels *Animal's People* and *A Breath of Fresh Air*. Body in these novels is not merely presented as a subjective commodity but also as an objective commodity. The authors talk about how our society plays a very important role in ascribing meanings to our bodies. The first impression of a person is formulated on the basis of his appearance. Visible physical injuries disturbing the outward appearance become one major reason for isolation in society. It also affects many other factors like marriage, job, family, respect, education etc which are other major factors for acceptance in society. In the novels, Animal, Anjali and Amar are conferred the positions of victims in society primarily because they fail to follow such societal norms and conditions owing to their physical injury. Though they have survived the tragedy and continue their lives, the society still considers them as victims. Thus they remain as victims even after many years of the tragedy.

The social construction of victimhood in the novels greatly affects the live of the victims, especially Anjali and Animal, in the form of an identity crisis. Throughout the novel, the characters are confused and face many dilemmas as to who they are? Also what they want in their lives? There is a constant conflict in terms of their selves and what they should be as constructed by the society. The characters are in search of the gap or void existing between their private and public identities. This goes to such an extent that for a crucial moment they lose trusts in them. There occurs a constant clash between their selves and the position of victimhood conferred upon them. It is through a process of self-realization that both Anjlai and Animal analyse what they want and thus embraces a transformed identity in their lives.

The process of empowerment in both the novels occurs in the form of development of a critical consciousness among the victims. Such a development occurs in two steps namely 'Identification and Acceptance' and 'Expressing of Critical Consciousness'. The first step involves identifying oneself and what a person requires. This process of identification and acceptance enables them to move forward in life and face difficulties. Such an act of acceptance helps people to gain more control of their lives as well as an ability to influence the world outside also through their activities. In the previous chapter, it has been mentioned how the characters have identified themselves during their process of self-realization. Anjali identifies her true aspects of identity through a process of emotional realization. She identifies her emotions of hatred and anger towards Prakash. Anjali herself confesses that she had feelings for Prakash, especially missing her days of being an Army man's wife. However her feelings of hatred and anger are more towards him because of the wrong he did to her and Amar. Her acceptance of her transformed identity occurs when she goes down her memory line and has reflections of the day the tragedy occurred, while talking to Indira, Prakash's wife. She imagines herself to be in the same situation of the day the tragedy occurred and understands how lucky she is to have escaped death. Thus Anjali embraces her new identity by confessing her thoughts to Sandeep. She confesses how she had felt confused regarding her decision of initiating the divorce against Prakash. However she finally realizes that Sandeep is a more suitable companion than Prakash. Moreover, unlike Indira she doesn't want to be the wife of a man who has hurt the feelings of another woman.

In the novel *Animal's People*, Animal's process of identification and acceptance occur in the form of him identifying himself with others affected by the tragedy. Here, empowerment occurs when Animal sees himself as one with the others affected by the tragedy. The acceptance

of his changed identity helps Animal to move from the concept of 'I' to the concept of 'We'. He identifies himself with those affected after becoming part of the justice movement in Khaufpur led by Zafar. In the beginning of the novel, Animal is full of disgust for the justice movement. However, the realization of working for others and becoming a part of others comes to him when he is left alone in the forest. He imagines himself in conversations with the 'Kha-in-the-jar' also called 'A child of poison'. Animal has imaginary conversation with the dead baby preserved in formalin in the hospital. The baby is black and died after inhaling the poisonous gas. Animal in his conversation recognizes how he never cared about others and always lived a selfish life. When he saw the dead baby, he felt that all the Khaufpurians were there inside the jar including him. Many of them were black, some blind, some struggling to breathe and some bleeding. This symbolic reference indicates his kinship with the other people affected by the tragedy in Khaufpur. Another major incident is the way Animal risks his life trying to save the other people, when the fire started in the Kampani. Despite his disability he runs from one house to another, warning and evacuating people from the fire and the poisonous gas. The following words indicate how he recognizes himself with the other people in Khaufpur:

The Apokalips has come again just like Ma Franci said. I cannot sit here alone. I have to help my brothers and sisters in Khaufpur. They are part of me. (Sinha 395)

Thus the process of identification occurs as a method of capacity building in the lives of the victims. There is a motivation to take action for the betterment of other people from the part of Animal as he is thinking of them as his own brothers and sisters.

The next level of empowerment occurs in the form of expressing of critical consciousness. This occurs in the form of expressing opinions and decisions. Both the victims in the novels, namely Animal and Anjali, become confident to talk from the new perspective of their transformed identity. They gain the confidence to speak about their opinions which they never had before. Here, empowerment occurs in the form of acquiring many abilities especially in the form of an ability to make decisions and express opinions. There is emerging self-confidence among the victims affected by the tragedy, followed by a process of internal and external change. The change that occurs within both Animal and Anjali helps them to come to conclusions and solve issues in the outside world.

In the novel *A Breath of Fresh Air* Anjali after recognizing her feelings for Prakash, shows a dramatic change in her attitude towards him. Her conversation with Prakash is indicative of this where she clearly expresses her opinion about him which she has never done before. The following words are indicative of how she gets empowered as a result of the Bhopal tragedy:

You don't need to be thanked Prakash for helping Amar.. You don't know how to make amends for the fault done and this is the only thing you can think of. I have always felt hatred for you but realized it late. I will never forget you and the days we spent. But now I realize what I want .I want to forget you. (Malladi 209)

Another major incident is the conversation with Prakash's wife Indira and how she explains her views on Prakash:

I loved Prakash in the past. He was my first love but my escape from death and the memories of the tragedy made me love myself for once. I have a family, a sick child. I have moved on. (Malladi 195)

These words of Anjali are clear examples of how she gets empowered socially. For much of the novel, Anjali is confused regarding her feelings for Prakash. She herself confesses that she cannot forget her old days with him and that Prakash is her first love. Her 'self' is being represented through these words. Prakash will always remain in her mind as her first love. On the other hand she is also aware of how society will view her if she continues to have feelings for Prakash. Society in her life, represented by Sandeep, Komal and her parents is always against her, especially her act of committing a divorcee. They have blamed and considered it as a bad quality of a woman to initiate a divorce. Such a woman can never have a happy life because she will always be alienated from the society. Anjali has herself experienced the victimization from the society for many years. Being considered as the 'other' for a long time has created an identity crisis in her mind. She feels frustrated and tired in her life when she is victimized and blamed by society. Though her personal identity always longed to go back to her luxurious life with all the comforts, she chooses to embrace the new identity of social empowerment. She thus decides to follow the norms of society by becoming a perfect wife so that she can be accepted by society and be accepted there. Thus social empowerment occurs in her life when she confesses her feelings about Prakash and her decision to forget the past to Sandeep. On the other hand individual empowerment always remains something unattainable as far as Anjali is concerned. She will always be blamed by her parents and Komal for initiating a divorce and working after marriage. However with her process of identification and expressing her views, Anjali tries to change the cultural and social understandings of a victim.

Animal in the novel *Animal's People* also shows how the protagonist, after the act of self acceptance, expresses the opinions and decisions of his life empowered by the tragedy. In the beginning of the novel, Animal is represented as selfish, arrogant and greedy. However after

experiencing identity crisis Animal has confusions regarding his identity as an Animal or a human being. Finally, he realizes and accepts the human being inside him. The first and foremost incident that indicates the way Animal expresses his opinion and decisions empowered by the acceptance of his identity is the reasons that he give for taping his memories in the tape recorder given by the journalist. Initially, Animal declared that he was not interested in sharing his experience but, towards the end of the novel, we find him justifying his act of sharing his memories. He begins by saying that he has a lot to tell the Jarnalis in the form of his experiences. He feels the happiness of sharing his life for the very first time. The following lines are indicative of this:

I am an upright human by the name of Animal and I want to tell my secrets of
how I became human. I am not afraid anymore. I am one among them in
Khaufpur. (Sinha 365)

The end of Animal's soliloquy also signifies how he gets empowered by accepting his human identity and his decision-making skills. The following song that Animal sings is indicative of this:

I am Animal fierce and flee,

In all the worlds is none like thee,

In fire's forge thy back did bend,

A human, by name Animal. (Sinha 342)

Animal in the novel also acquires social empowerment with his acceptance of being a human being through the process of identification with others. In the beginning of the novel, he

is a disabled creature alienated from his village of Khaufpur. He doesn't have a family or a job and wanders from one place to another. The entire society of Khaufpur consisting of those affected and unaffected considers him as a victim. It is only after coming in contact with the struggle for justice that Animal starts analyzing the human qualities within him. Animal also falls prey to identity crisis when he starts having doubts as to which category he belongs to-- a human or an animal. The position of victim given to him by society has always considered him as the other. Animal finally accepts his identity of a human being through emotional realization in the form of his monologues as well as through his identification with those affected by the tragedy in the community. He becomes socially empowered when people start recognizing him as a human being after observing his contributions to the struggle for justice. Animal risks his own life to save the people from the fire that spreads from the factory. He gets beaten up when he tries to protect Nish and Somraj from the police. Zafar and Farooq call him the 'true human being.' Thus Animal understands the value of being accepted in society. He becomes socially empowered when people in Khaufpur recognize him for his contribution to the struggle for justice. He himself confesses that he is not afraid of anyone in society as he is now acceptable in the society. Thus Animal becomes socially empowered through the process of critical consciousness.

In both the novels, the Bhopal tragedy becomes the context for creating social empowerment among the victims. In other words, social empowerment is acquired by Animal and Anjali as an answer to the inequalities and oppressions faced in the context of the Bhopal tragedy. Here the transformed identity initiates social empowerment through the development of critical consciousness. Thus, in both novels, the process of empowerment occurs in social terms and the Bhopal tragedy presented by the authors becomes one context to examine how the social

construction of victim leads to an identity crisis and transformation of identity, finally resulting in social empowerment. The authors also present the context of the Bhopal tragedy to examine the social evils occurring in society like the negative attitude towards a divorcee, a widow, classification based on financial and economic factors.

A major limitation of this research is that it looks only at the physical and social impact of the tragedy. The aftereffects of a tragedy are more complex and dynamic. It is not restricted only to the aspects examined in this thesis. Another major limitation of the research is that, only fictional representations of the tragedy in the form of two novels are used here. The research doesn't include any non-fictional works.

The Bhopal tragedy and the aftereffects of the tragedy is a much discussed topic in many areas of studies like Disaster Management, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology etc. This thesis thus adds to the scope of the study in terms of analyzing the fictional representations of the tragedy in the novels *Animal's People* and *A Breath of Fresh Air*. This research thus tries to contribute to the continuing relevance of the tragedy where it attempts to analyze the event of the Bhopal tragedy as a text. The novels used here provide a system of meanings to analyze the various components that happen in the aftermath of a tragedy in particular the aftereffects on the body and identity. This research also becomes a way to understand how process of formation of identity takes place in both the novels. Identity formation can never come to an end. It is something that occurs continuously. The various issues associated with Identity examined in this research, especially the aspect of identity crisis can be further examined in terms of human rights and ethics. Moreover the ideas used in this research can also be further extended to non-fictional texts.

Works Cited

Malladi ,Amullya. *A Breath of Fresh Air*. U.S.A. Random House Publishing. 2002.

Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. U.K. Pocket Books. 2007. Print.

Select Bibliography

- Baxi, Upendra. "Twilight of Human Rights In India". *India International Centre Quarterly*.30.2(2003): 19-28. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Becker, M Steven. "Psychological Effects of Chemical Disasters." *Environmental Health Perspectives Journal*. 105.66(1997): 1557-1563. *ProQuest*. Web. 23 September 2014.
- Best,S. *Understanding Social Divisions*. London. Sage Publications. 2005. Print
- Brueggman, Brenda. "Becoming Visible: Lessons in Disability" *College Composition and Communication* .52.3(2008): 368-398. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 March 2015.
- Burke, J. Peter. *A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity*. New York. Guilford Press.2011. Print.

Caruth, Cathy. *Recapturing the Past: Introduction*. Baltimore and London. John Hopkins University Press. 1995. Print

Christie, Nils. *Criminological Data as a Mirror for Society*. New York. 1973. Plenum Press. Print

Companion, Michael. *Disaster's Impact on Culture and Survival*. CRC Press. New York. 2015. Print.

Conger, J John. "The Evolution of Identity". *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*. 42.4 (1964): 36-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 September 2014

Cook, D. *Criminal and Social Justice*. London. Sage Publications. 2005. Print.

Davies, P. Francis. *Victimisation: Theory , Research and Policy*. Basingstoke. Palgrave. 2003. Print.

Davis, J. Lennard. "Crips Strike Back : The Rise of Disability Studies". *American Literary History*. 11.3(1999): 500-512. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 March 2015.

. Deeny, Pat. *The Impact of Diaster on Culture, Self and Identity*. Psychology and Society. 40.3 (2005): 431-440. *JSTOR*. Web. 15 October 2015.

Deva, Surya. "Future of Human Rights." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 39.49(2004): 5198-5201. *Springer*. Web. 17 January 2015.

Divakaruni, Chitra. *Poisoned Chalice*. Rev of *A Breath of Fresh Air*, by Amullya Malladi. Los Angeles Times 8 September 2002, Los Angeles ed: 7. Print.

- Dugan, B. *Loss of Identity in Disaster*. Perspective In Psychiatric Care. 43.1 (2007): 41-61. Springer. Web. 13 October 2015.
- Dynes, R Russell. "Response to Social Crisis and Disaster." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 15.3. 9 (1977): 23-49. JSTOR. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Erikson, Eric. *Dimensions of a New Identity*. New York. Norton Publications. 1979. Print.
- Furedi, Frank. "The Changing Meaning of Disaster". *Area: The Royal Geographical Society Journal*. 39.4(2007): 482-489. Springer. Web. 17 January 2015.
- Heise, D.R.. *Understanding Events: Affects and the Construction of Social Action*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1949. Print
- Hopl, Heather. "Complexity and Catastrophe: Disentangling the Complex Narratives of the Union Carbide Disaster in Bhopal". *Economic and Political Weekly*. 7.3(2005): 64-75. JSTOR. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Jacobs, Mike. *Identity after disaster*. Texas. Texas Medical University Press. 2001. Print.
- Kapoor, Renu. "Psychological Consequences of Bhopal Tragedy". *Population and Environment Journal*. 13.3(1992): 209-215. Springer. Web. 17 January 2015.
- Kabel, Allison. "Disaster Prepper: Health and Identity". *Human Organization Journal*. 73.3 (2014): 258-266. Springer . Web. 13 September 2015
- Khare, R.S. *The Bhopal Industrial Accident: Anthropological and Civic Issues*. Anthropology Today. 3. 4 (1987): 4-6. JSTOR. Web. 25 September 2014.

Lardigo, Lourdes. *Victims and Survivors*. Washington DC. American Psychological Association Publishers. 1995. Print

Mahlstedt, Andrew. Animal's Eyes: Spectacular Invisibility and the Terms of Recognition in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*. *Mosaic Journal for Literature*. 46.3 (2013). 59-74. Manitoba University Press. Print.

Malladi ,Amullya. *A Breath of Fresh Air*. U.S.A. Random House Publishing. 2002. Print

Mukherjee, Suroopa. "Dancing in the Streets": narratives of resistance in Bhopal eighteen years after the gas tragedy". *India International Centre Quarterly*. 30.1(2003): 170-180. *JSTOR*.Web. 26 September 2014.

Moya, M.L. *Reclaiming Identity*. Hyderabad. Orient Longman Publishers. 2001. Print.

. Mukherjee, Suroopa. "We Are Flames Not Flowers: A Gendered Reading of the Social Movement for Justice in Bhopal". *Interface*. 3.2(2011): 100-122. *Project Muse*. Web. 10 January 2015.

Nayer. K Pramod. "From Bhopal to Biometrics: Biological Citizenship in the Age of Globalization". *Citizenship and Identity in the Age of Surveillance*. India. Cambridge University Press. 2015. Print.

Parson, Raldolph Erwin. *Victims of Disaster* . John Hopkins University Press. 2004. Print.

- Patricia, Anne Fagan. "Reading the Human- Animal Borderland in *Animal's People*." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 73.9(2009): 16-21. *Springer*. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Poore, Carol. "The (Im)Perfect Human Being" and the Beginning of Disability Studies." *New German Critique*. 86.1(2002): 179-190. *Springer*. Web. 24 March 2015.
- Rickel, Jennifer. The Poor Remain Poor: A Post Humanist Rethinking of Literary Humanitarianism in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*. *Ariel Journal*. 43.1 (2012): 55-60. Print.
- Samuels, Ellen. "Theorizing Disability Studies". *Contemporary Literature Journal*. 50.3(2009): 629-633. *JSTOR*. Web. 23 March 2015.
- Sarangi, Satinath. "The Movement in Bhopal And Its Lessons". *Social Justice Article*. 23.4(1996): 100-108. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 September 2014.
- Sarup, Madan. *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press. 1996. Print
- Schilling, Chris. *Changing Bodies*. New York. Sage Publications. 2008. Print.
- Schumm, Y. Darla. "Reimagining Disability." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. 26.2(2010): 132-137. *Springer*. Web. 25 March 2015.
- Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. U.K. Pocket Books. 2007. Print.
- Smith, Hernstein. "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories". *Critical Inquiry*. 7.1 (1980): 213-217.

Smith, Kenneth. "Gender and Disaster." *Economic and Political Weekly*. 21.2(1998): 175-195. *Springer*. 17 September 2014.

Smith, Oliver Antony. *Anthropological Research on Hazards and Disasters*. Annual Review of Anthropology. 25. 2 (1996): 303-328. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 September 2014.

Stryker. S. *Identity, Self and Social Movement*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press. 2000. Print.

Turner.S, Bryan. *Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. New York. Sage Publications. 2008. Print.

Van, der Kolk Bessel. *Body Keeps the Score: Memories of Body and Disaster*..England. Guildford Press. 1996. Print.

Weisaeth, Laus. *The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Body: Disaster and Body*. New York. Viking Adult. 2014. Print

Woodward, Kath. *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*. New York. Routledge Publishers. 2004. Print

