

## **International Conference**

**titled**

### ***Mapping Disability in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature and Culture***

**Organized by**

**Department of English, University of Delhi**

**in collaboration with**

**Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> October, 2024**

**Venue: Conference Centre, University of Delhi (Main Campus), Delhi.-110007**

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

It is generally argued that disability studies gained momentum primarily during the 1980s and 90s, and that the pivotal moment in disability discourse was the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007, through which, the culmination of the rights-based model of disability was achieved. While recognizing this point of view, the proposed conference aims to challenge this notion by demonstrating that disability as a discourse has existed in culture and literature long before the 90s, often considered the point of entry onto this field. Interest in disability and its recognition began much earlier, with significant roots, both in English literature as well as the literature of the Indian subcontinent, in the early 1900s, especially from 1900 to 1950s. The two World Wars contributed to focussing attention on this issue as returning veterans, their families, and nation-states needed to deal with physical and psychological challenges on an unprecedented scale. Numerous texts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century comprehensively explore the trauma of war addressing alienation, mental and physical disabilities resulting from conflict, the inter-war years, and the post-World War II human rights discourse. The proposed Conference hopes to demonstrate that such 20th-century representations address disability in a nuanced manner well before it was formally recognized as an academic discipline.

Apart from providing a platform for critical discussions on the representation of disability in literature and films during this transformative period in history, the proposed Conference hopes to attract a diverse group of participants and foster a comprehensive dialogue on the multidimensional representations of disability during the 20th century. By examining literary and cinematic portrayals, the Conference will provide a wide-ranging understanding of how disabilities were depicted and the connect between these representations and societal perceptions as well as the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.

**Salient objectives include:**

1. the analysis of representations of disability in literature and films between 1900 and 1980.
2. investigation of the historical, cultural, and social contexts influencing these representations.
3. discussion on the impacts of literary and cinematic portrayals on public perceptions and policy concerning disability, with an emphasis on the recovery of the modern through the agency of the Disability Studies.
4. bringing together scholars from the field of English studies and other disciplines to explore intersections and draw a roadmap for preparation of curriculum related to disability studies in English departments across the universities.
5. to foster a dialogue between 20<sup>th</sup> century disability representations and other critical engagements, such as caste, class, gender, post-colonialism and digital humanities—thereby sparking fresh discussions on disability.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

1. Enhanced understanding of the way in which disability unlocks the modern in literature and films.
2. Formation of an international network of scholars and practitioners working on disability.
3. Recommendations for more inclusive and accurate portrayals of disability in contemporary media.
4. Publication of select conference papers in journal or edited volume.

By examining these portrayals, we hope to contribute to a broader understanding of the cultural and social dimensions of disability and promote more inclusive practices in literature and media. The Conference shall bring together academics and researchers in literature, disability studies, and film studies as well as students and scholars interested in cultural and social history.

The **thematic areas** relating to responses to disability in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature and Culture for various sessions include, but are not limited to:

1. Changing paradigms and evolving approaches to Disability.
2. Disability in early 20th-century literature: Key texts and authors.
3. Modern and postmodern approaches to disability.
4. Contextualizing disability in British and American literatures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
5. Discussion on the representation of disability in the 20<sup>th</sup> literature of the Indian subcontinent in English and in translation.
6. The impact of the two World Wars on disability representations.
7. The role of literature and films in shaping the sense of the modern and its responses to disability.
8. The influence of rights-based discourse on literary and cinematic portrayals.
9. The evolving dimensions of disability in mainstream cinema.
10. The intersection of disability with race, gender, caste and class in literature and culture.
11. Disability and life-narratives.

12. Transitions from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the present.

Papers are invited on the above themes/any other related to the broad areas of the conference. Abstracts of around 300 words with keywords may be sent to [conference@english.du.ac.in](mailto:conference@english.du.ac.in) with the subject line 'ABSTRACT: [name of paper presenter]'.

**Important dates:**

Last date for submission of abstracts: 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2024.

Notification of accepted papers through email(whenever applicable): 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2024.

Submission of final papers(approx. 2500 words): 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2024.

Conference: 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.

Anil

**Prof. Anil K. Aneja**  
**Head of the Department**