

Epidemiological statistics of the past decade reveals high incidental prevalence of the malady of cancer. Rippling effect of this uncharted presence of this illness has evoked mass anxiety of species survival. Traversing the Medical frontiers in the treatment protocol still has not mitigated the pervasiveness of its arbitrary random occurrence. Forewarned is forearmed is the motto that offers stability in "can survive" ethics. Bridging the scientific evidences with literature through a platform of discussion will widen the horizons of awareness and optimism among the populace.

A productive dialogue between the scientific fraternity and the humanities is expected to bring about an enriching platform. Scholarly papers-*scientific, cultural, literary and social - on the issue of adaptation to cancer, disease literature, hope literature, media and disease, survival literature, science fiction and maladies, cure theory, advertisement and awareness, awareness literatures, globalisation and disease, psychology and disease, society and disease, climate and disease, disease and geography, heredity and disease, food and disease, surviving cancer and living with cancer* are invited to be presented.

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HORIZON OF HOPE - CAN SURVIVE



Horizon of Hope

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Horizon of Hope

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PREFACE

Illness is the night side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place. (Sontag 3).

Expressive writing is a relentless part of human aesthetics. It has a unique place in the art of creativity at all ages of life, in all cultures and in all fractions of human advancements. Expressive writing is a mode of expressing one's feelings, experiences and emotions. It becomes a consoling element, a catalyst between life and mind that reacts to its most, in order to bring peace to the person. The history of writing comprises of an exclusive and indigenous style in each locality and in each group of survival. Writing is a journey from life towards literature. It is the portrayal of the self and recognition of worldly experiences which the writer has encompassed. Writing bestows aspiration, hope, freedom etc., and calms the sound and fury of the mind. It is the tranquil path created to realise the self within. Writing is interpreted as a tool of healing and is considered to have a therapeutic value. It is a solace for the disturbed, conflicting, confused, chaotic and disruptive mind.

Writing has the power to explore the past, experience the present and envision the future. Creative writing and Life writing could be considered as two forms of Expressive writing, one representing imagination and the other expressing the experience of life. Expressive writing brings satisfaction and contentment to the life of the writers during the time of happiness, pain, health, illness etc. Diseased mind has always created a space in literature that comforts and creates a path to escape from reality. Tracing the history of literature, it is perceived that illness was one of the reasons that led to the advent of many prolific writers.

The Post Millennium period has led to an increase in multiple forms of diseases and cancer has secured a prominent place. Gina Kolata, in *New York Times*, of June 1 2004, expresses that "There are now nearly ten million cancer survivors in this country, up from three million in 1971 and six million in 1986. Many live for years or decades and it is becoming impossible to ignore questions about their lives." It is observed that the scientific and technological methods and strategies to diagnose the disease are increasing day by day. Simultaneously, the survival strategy of expressive writing is also seen progressing as a tool of healing.

The dichotomy of mind and body, health and sickness, distress and hope, destruction and desire, suppression and expression, acceptance and seclusion etc. are found in disease narratives. The agony that the disease causes physically and psychologically among women is varied when placed in a patriarchal society. Therefore it has become a necessity to understand the narratives written by the female cancer survivors expressed during and after the diseased condition. Life, disease and literature are strung together to express the idea of the diseased self. A feeling of isolation, the conflict of existence, the affiliation and revulsion towards the concept of body, the burden of sustenance and survival of the writer are also expressed through the narratives.

It is observed that narrative writing has become a tool to break the silence between the diseased mind and the real mind. The writers used the genre of writing as a means of self-defence from time immemorial. Literature explores the fact that those who were precisely attacked by physical and psychological diseases, writers like Sylvia Plath, Mary Shelly etc. made use of writing as a means to overcome the existing physical and psychological ailment. Schizophrenic diseases have always depended on the scope of writing to explore the various layers of the affected mind. Though there are studies done regarding cancer narratives in the context of Medical Science and Psychology, there are not many works exploring the area of Women Cancer Narratives.

Susan Sontag analysis illness as Metaphor and Mary De Shazer in *Fractured Borders* places cancer narratives in a cultural context.

There is an inevitable need to scrutinize the experiences encountered by the affected at various levels of thinking.

The Book, *Horizon of Hope* , is a compilation of research papers attempting to scrutinise the intricacies encountered by the victims of disease and the measures that could help in overcoming the painful scenario of existence.

Julie Dominic A

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