



## Impairments and Society: A Study of Maladies with special reference to Tennessee Williams

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**Abstract :** *Our attempt in this research paper is to study the ideas of impairment and society and their interrelationship. We have studied different types of impairments such as physical, mental, emotional and psychological, along with their effects on the “impaired” as well as the society.*

*The role of literature has always been influential in representing the minority and the neglected section of the society. The way literature portrays social problems and individuals in society becomes crucial as it shapes the way population forms its ideas and perceptions. Literature can also*

*be the medium to bring forth the plight of such communities who are largely ignored in public discussion.*

*The plays of Tennessee Williams provide ample scope to study different impairments, the affected characters and the attitude of society towards them. We have dealt with physical impairment, cancer, mental illness and alcoholism. We have also discussed homosexuality as an exception to the heterosexual normalcy, not as a malady but as a social taboo.*

**Keywords:** *Impairment, Malady, Society, Alcoholism, Homosexuality, Homophobia, Schizophrenia.*

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### Introduction :

The term ‘impairment’ brings before us visions such as a crippled man strolling in the park in his wheelchair, or a blind man trying to cross the road or the mother of a ‘special’ child dragging him to the ‘special’ school. Impairment or disability is a condition of the body. The medical model of disability holds any sort of impairment in the body as a malfunction of the body. It sees the body of the disabled person as the problem that needs correction or treatment. Medical sciences have held and largely continue to hold the authority over the human body, in common perception.