

Disability as an Inequality

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Disability

Disability refers to a situation whereby one has a mental or physical impairment. In the case of impairment, the person is usually disadvantaged, and the ability to carry out day-to-day activities is hindered. Hence, they are often in continuous exclusion from education, whether formal or informal.

People with a disability also face a lot of injustices and forms of discrimination in almost every area of the world. They face these problems despite sharing the national wealth, national boundaries, and federal poverty (Baldrige and Richard 2015).

There are usually many types of disabilities, but for this paper, we will focus more on physical and mental disabilities.

The Effects of Inequality

There are also many types of disparities. The first example of bias is known as:

- **Ableism:** Ableism is a form of discrimination and exclusion of a group of persons who have a disability.
- **Stigma:** This is also another form of inequality. In this scenario, there is a particular type of person in society who is handled and treated differently than other people.

A lot is going on in the USA, especially in matters involving people with disabilities. For example, since the establishment of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), people with disabilities have been protected by law and the Constitution, especially in education, employment, and research centers. There has been advancement in most firms when human resource managers employ people with disabilities; this is significant recognition by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Recruitment has been driven by the continuous growth of the U.S. economy, especially in many sectors. These jobs given to people with disabilities have been organized by U.S. state agencies with the goal of ensuring that this group of people can live independently.

There has also been significant advancement by the American Department of Labor, commonly known as ODEP, as it has sought to increase work opportunities for people with disabilities. This branch of the Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) continues to do this by ensuring there are sufficient training programs put in place. Moreover, they also provide education, technology, entrepreneurial development, and the organization of small-business hubs for people with disabilities.

Trends in Employment and Health

According to census data released in 1990, approximately 50.2% of disabled persons were employed. In today's contemporary world, the number has reduced significantly to roughly 41% (Thomson 2017). The cause of the reduction has been attributed to the aging population. Those who are aging sometimes become too weak and old and are unable to do their jobs as they did before, since they sometimes lose their sight and become unable to work night shifts.

Although some work has been seen in the health sector, especially for persons with disabilities, I tend to concur that much can still be done. For instance, disabled persons are the majority in the demographic data that requires a lot of healthcare and health programs. If we look back as far as 2006, we find that disabled people's healthcare costs were estimated to account for 26.7% of healthcare disbursement. This equals approximately \$397.8 billion. This year, the expenditure cost is expected to continue to rise, which explains why the U.S. government is firing on all cylinders to ensure that these groups of people feel that they are not left behind by healthy persons.

There are many potential ways to address disability problems that seem deeply entrenched in our culture. The first is setting up federal agencies such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). These federal agencies can provide financial support to people with severe disabilities, helping them survive independently without placing a burden on the working population, which is usually involved in paying heavy taxes. Moreover, when this is done, instances of discrimination, especially in the workplace, would be significantly reduced.

The social drift hypothesis is another way to explain the problems facing persons with disabilities. In simple terms, it suggests that poverty in society can result from widespread mental illness. This statement seems reasonable because when a person is mentally impaired, learning and cognitive functions are usually compromised. However, this thesis has faced opposing ideas through the social causation theory.

This model argues that one's existence in a particular social class is attributed to the possibility of that specific person having a mental disorder. From research studies, we see that unemployed persons usually have increased amounts of stress. The distress then leads to increased physical problems. When one has physical issues, the ability to work well is curtailed, leading to decreased income levels.

In summary, regarding the social drift hypothesis, we should ensure we are stress-free as we carry out our day-to-day business activities so that the number of disabled persons affected by distress is cut down. Moreover, if this is not done, social workers would have to intervene for people with disabilities since they are unable to manage themselves.

Throughout human history, we have found that disabled persons are treated differently from persons who usually fit social norms and codes of conduct. For example, in 1907, disabled persons were involuntarily sterilized so that they could not pass bad genes to future generations. This sort of behavior is biased and a disgrace to society in general. So, regarding the historical dimensions of people with disabilities, we can say that their path has not been smooth, as they have often been neglected by healthy persons.

The neglect by healthy people has gone on for too long. For example, in countries like Greece, disabled people were killed in the forest and left abandoned there. In England during the early 15th century, their queen at that time decided to divide the poor into three groups. This is a sort of discrimination, and if it happened in today's contemporary world, respect for all able-bodied men and women would be lost.

There have been many social, economic, and demographic factors that have helped reshape the problem of disability that continues to exist in society today. This is through the building of societal models to ensure that there is a proper physical environment for disabled persons to showcase their knowledge and skills, which would enable them to realize their goals in society. Politics as a factor focuses on the rights of these individuals. For example, politics ensures that disabled people's right to employment is respected and upheld by the rule of law at all times. These rights would then allow them to be engaged in all public domains of social life. When such things are followed to the letter, the problems they sometimes face, such as mass killings and abandonment, decrease. This, therefore, has reshaped our perspective on how we view this group of people. More people can now look in the mirror and say that disabled people are just like them and that their rights should be respected. The economic factor also argues that handicapped people should be allowed to work in society, as they can contribute to the national per capita income just like able-bodied persons. This contribution to per capita income is a unifying factor, thus shaping our level of focus on how we should treat people with disabilities.

When we come to the disability world, there is a strong relationship between sociological dimensions and disability. For example, we often see disability as a form of social oppression, just like ageism, homophobia, and racism. This is different from viewing it as an individual problem that could have been caused by a minor physical impairment. Hence, we see it as a form of social oppression that undercuts both personal and public domains. In this article, we are going to focus on the psycho-emotional dimensions.

The psycho-emotional dimension has been known to cause a lot of distress for disabled persons, as most of the time they feel worthless and ashamed. Whenever they are in this situation, the

other group of persons who are perceived to be normal are also affected. For example, they feel that they are somehow facing a structural barrier. This sort of problem therefore perfectly explains why disability is spotlighted as a social problem rather than an individual problem. The reason is that the psycho-emotional dimension is brought about by cultural representations and how we interact with other people.

Those who live with disability have found that living with it is not an easy task. Moreover, the needs of such individuals also tend to fluctuate in their lives, leading to social, emotional, and financial constraints (Haagsma et al. 2016). Having a disability might also lead a person to feel very depressed, hence feeling the wrath of social isolation. Impairment also points to a lack of independence. Disabled people most of the time want to be cared for and looked after by their immediate relatives; however, when they are neglected, they tend to experience mental burnout and depression.

There are many nonprofit organizations in the U.S. that put the welfare of people with disabilities at the forefront. For example, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is one of the most prominent cross-disability nonprofit organizations whose work is to ensure that disabled persons achieve financial self-sufficiency. Moreover, they also deal with political empowerment for these types of people to ensure there are non-discrimination laws put in place to help these individuals.

There is also another organization known as American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT), whose work is to ensure that people with disabilities are in nursing homes and are well taken care of. The American Foundation for the Blind is also another organization whose

sole purpose is to advocate for the rights of individuals who have visual impairments. In summary, there are many agencies in the USA that advocate for the rights of these individuals.

Many policies have been proposed since the 1900s to address disability as inequality. An example is seen in the establishment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which works hand in hand with other health insurance covers, such as Medicaid, to solve the problems facing disabled persons. The 44th president of the United States, Barack Obama, offered specific, concise, and clear policy proposals that ensured disabled people had an expanded social safety net and that their civil rights were respected.

In 1981, the Ronald Reagan administration came up with policies to address disability as an inequality by proposing the elimination of pesky federal regulations. The first strategy implemented was access to public schools by disabled persons. This was a good move to ensure the number of discriminated persons was significantly reduced. The policies have not yet been successful, since there is still a lot of fighting going on about the civil rights of disabled people.

Disability is a legal term under the ADA, the Americans with Disabilities Act. This is because disability has a legal definition enshrined in the laws. According to the ADA definition of disabled persons, they are referred to as people who have a mental or physical impairment that, to some extent, limits one's primary life activity (Young 2015). Therefore, the ADA makes it extremely unlawful to discriminate against people who have a physical or mental disability.

Discrimination should not occur in workplaces, public accommodations, commercial facilities, the transportation sector, or telecommunications areas.

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