

DISABILITY AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY IN PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract: This article analyzes the concept of disability as an object of philosophical and psychological research. The study highlights the interconnection between social, individual, and psychological aspects of disability. It also examines modern approaches, including inclusive education and social integration of persons with disabilities.

Keywords: disability, philosophy, psychology, inclusive education, social integration.

Human life is a complex and multifaceted process, in which health, work capacity, and social activity play a significant role. Disability is not only a medical concept but also a philosophical, social, and ethical one. Although it reflects limitations in a person’s physical or mental abilities, it does not, in fact, determine their place or value in society.

Disability is a condition in which a person, as a result of illness, injury, trauma, or an accident, completely or temporarily loses their ability to work. A person who requires social support and protection due to physical or mental impairments is recognized as a disabled person.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the degree of disability is determined by the Medical Labor Expert Commission (MLEC). Depending on the extent of lost work capacity, disability is classified into three groups and can be assigned temporarily (for 6–12 months) or permanently.

Group I disability — persons who have completely lost their work capacity and require constant care and supervision by others.

Group II disability — persons who have fully lost their work capacity but do not require constant care, although they are unable to perform long-term labor activities.

Group III disability — persons with a significant reduction in work capacity but capable of performing certain types of light work.

The state takes measures aimed at improving the quality of life of socially vulnerable groups, creating conditions for their full participation in society and state life, and expanding their opportunities to independently meet their basic life needs. For example, persons with disabilities are provided with state allowances, medical care is offered when necessary, and prosthetic-orthopedic devices are supplied. In addition, special conditions are created to enable their education and engagement in work activities.

In contemporary scientific research, the concept of disability is interpreted not only narrowly as a medical condition but also broadly as a social and psychological phenomenon. This approach requires studying disability in relation to a person’s active participation in society, as well as their rights and opportunities [5; 2].

From this perspective, philosophy and psychology serve as an important methodological foundation for studying disability.

In philosophical literature, disability is viewed as an inseparable aspect of human existence. The main focus is on human dignity and social equality. According to modern concepts, disability is more often interpreted as the result of barriers created by society [7; 4].

This approach is recognized as the “social model,” where the emphasis is placed not on a person’s impairments but on the obstacles present in the environment. It requires examining disability within the framework of social justice and human rights.

From a psychological perspective, disability significantly affects a person’s emotional state, self-esteem, and processes of social adaptation. Research shows that persons with disabilities often require psychological support [9].

At the same time, a well-organized social environment and psychological assistance expand their opportunities for personal development [10]. In this process, positive motivation, social support, and self-awareness play a crucial role.

According to representatives of humanistic philosophy, such as A. Maslow and C. Rogers, every individual is naturally inclined toward self-expression and realizing their potential. Rogers emphasizes: “Each person stands at the center of their own life and is naturally inclined to realize their potential” [1].

Therefore, a person with a disability also has the right to actively shape their life and find their place in society.

However, according to A. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, disability may pose certain obstacles to meeting one’s needs. From the perspective of Maslow’s theory, the following analyses can be applied to persons with disabilities.

For individuals with disabilities, basic needs — such as physiological needs, safety, a healthy environment, and adaptable conditions — may not always be fully satisfied. For example, mobility limitations, difficulties in accessing medical services, or infrastructure not adapted for persons with disabilities can hinder the full fulfillment of daily needs.

As a result, higher-level needs identified by Maslow — love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization — may not develop adequately. Maslow states: “If the basic needs are not satisfied, higher-level needs do not emerge” [2].

Existential philosophy, in turn, views disability as a test of human existence, an internal struggle for self-understanding and finding the meaning of life. From this perspective, according to J.-P. Sartre, “Man is a being who creates himself” [3]. Therefore, physical limitations cannot deprive a person of inner freedom and spiritual strength.

The philosophy of social justice links disability to issues of equality and opportunities in society. In other words, persons with disabilities should have the right to live in society without barriers and to realize their potential. J. Rawls connects disability to the issue of equal opportunities. As Rawls writes: “For a society to be just, the interests of the least advantaged must be given priority” [4]. The role of the social environment is particularly important in the issue of disability. Stereotypes and misconceptions in society can limit the opportunities of persons with disabilities [11].

Therefore, in the modern education system, the inclusive approach is considered a priority. Inclusive education ensures that persons with disabilities have equal access to education and accelerates their social integration [12].

Currently, the biopsychosocial model is widely applied in the study of disability. This model explains disability as the result of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors [13].

This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of disability and enhances the effectiveness of scientific research.

Research results indicate that the concept of disability is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon, and fully understanding it requires integrating philosophical and psychological approaches. In modern society, it is important to develop an inclusive and humanitarian approach to disability.

The place, rights, and values of persons with disabilities in society are determined not by their abilities but by the humanity of society. Disability tests not a person's capabilities but the humanity of society. This is a task that is relevant not only scientifically but also practically.

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