

THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY AND THE PROBLEM OF STIGMATIZATION: A HUMAN RIGHTS–BASED APPROACH*Turdiyeva Madinaxon Farhod qizi**Farg'ona davlat universiteti**ijtimoiy ish kafedrasida 1-kurs magistranti***ABSTRACT**

This article scientifically examines how disability is interpreted by society as a disease or individual defect, which reinforces the process of stigmatization. Such an approach can lead to the social exclusion of persons with disabilities, limiting their opportunities and rights. In this study, stigmatization is analyzed as a social labeling mechanism that positions individuals in opposition to other members of society[1].

Furthermore, when stigma is internalized by the individual, it becomes a psychosocial factor that shapes their behavior and leads to self-limitation[2]. The article also highlights the historical foundations of the social model of disability, emphasizing that this model views the cause of disability not in the individual's physical or intellectual limitations, but in the institutional, cultural, and infrastructural barriers created by society.

KEYWORDS

Disability, Social Model, Stigmatization, Human Rights, Socialization, Equal Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in modern society, the issue of disability is increasingly perceived not merely as a medical problem but as a social, legal, and cultural phenomenon. In this context, since the second half of the 20th century, the social model of disability has emerged. This approach views the cause of disability not in an individual's physical or intellectual limitations, but in the institutional, economic, and cultural barriers created by society. The social model recognizes persons with disabilities not as passive objects in need of assistance, but as active subjects capable of advocating for their rights and interests. This article analyzes the essence of stigmatization within the framework of this approach.

MAIN BODY

Disability should not be perceived by society as a disease, nor should it become an obstacle to individuals realizing their full potential. This is the essence of the problem of stigmatization. Stigmatization (derived from the Greek word meaning "mark" or "label") refers to the act of separating individuals or assigning them social labels such as "defective" or "incurable" based on external characteristics. As a result, the individual is set apart from others and positioned in opposition to other members of society. Consequently, the person may fall outside formal or informal organizational

structures and join the ranks of marginalized groups. When stigma is internalized by the individual, it becomes a factor that programs behavior and influences self-regulation[3].

The social model of disability, which gradually shifted the understanding of disability from a purely medical framework to a social perspective, emerged in the 1970s within the movement for children with disabilities in the United Kingdom. It emphasized that children with disabilities feel disadvantaged and socially excluded not because of their medical conditions, but due to discriminatory practices and social marginalization. From the perspective of the social model, disability is fundamentally a socio-political issue. This, in turn, has significant implications for policy-making, particularly in prioritizing the removal of barriers and promoting human and civil rights.

In a broader sense, the social model of disability focuses on environmental, economic, and cultural barriers, as well as the harmful consequences of physical or intellectual limitations, that individuals encounter when interacting with other children. The social model fully manifests in enabling children with disabilities to organize and advocate for their equality and rights. Within this framework, children with physical limitations are regarded not as passive recipients of external assistance but as active creators of their own destinies. This approach aligns closely with the human rights-based perspective adopted by governmental agencies worldwide.

Empowering children with physical disabilities to lead and make decisions about their personal lives, the social model serves as a tool for liberation, not only in developed countries but also in developing nations where poverty is widespread. Advocating the social model ensures that children with disabilities are protected from health-related limitations and have equitable access to healthcare, clean drinking water, disease prevention, conflict mitigation, and poverty alleviation, thereby preventing physical harm.

Over the past few decades, organizations representing persons with disabilities have developed approaches based on human rights and environmental understanding to address disability issues. Both approaches are grounded in the social model of disability, emphasizing the necessity of structural changes in society that enable all individuals to participate actively in social life. These models focus not on individual limitations but on weakening societal structures that exclude persons with disabilities. On this basis, organizations of persons with disabilities are increasingly uniting to advocate for their rights[4].

When studying disability, the traditional concept integrates four models of disability (see Table 1). Among these, three are considered particularly important: medical, administrative, and economic..

Table 1

Disability Concepts and Models [5]

Disability Concepts	Disability model	Disability Concept	Integratsion
Traditional	Medical	Disease or Defect	Adaptation of the individual to an unchanging
	Medical-Social	Social deficiencies leading to limitations in daily	

	(Administrative)	activities	environment
	Economic	Complete or partial loss of work capacity	
	Moral	Result of sin	Abandoned
Social-Cultural	Social	Limitation of ability to participate in social activities	Changes in social structures according to the needs of persons with disabilities
Independent Living for Persons with Disabilities	Political-Legal	Limitations in opportunities (congenital or acquired)	
	Cultural Pluralism Model	Development influenced by skin color, religion, etc., along with cultural limitations	

The socio-cultural concept of disability reflects contemporary realities. Its fundamental difference from the traditional understanding lies in the idea that the living environment should be purposefully adapted to integrate persons with disabilities into society. Within this framework, the social model of disability was developed. However, despite being progressive, a limitation of this model is that it still recognizes persons with disabilities primarily as individuals with restricted capacity for social participation.

CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that interpreting disability based on traditional medical and administrative models serves as a factor that reinforces discrimination and stigmatization in society. Such an approach marginalizes persons with disabilities, limiting their rights and opportunities. Consequently, social inequality intensifies, and individuals' potential to realize their abilities is significantly reduced.

The social model of disability offers an alternative approach to this problem. Within this model, disability is understood as a product of barriers created by society, and adapting the environment and developing inclusive social policies are considered priority tasks[6]. This approach supports the rights of persons with disabilities to live independently, make decisions, and participate actively in social life.

In summary, eliminating stigmatization and widely implementing a socio-cultural approach to disability are among the essential conditions for the progress of modern society. In the current process of globalization, a human rights-based perspective enables persons with disabilities to be recognized as full members of society, enhancing their social participation and creating equal opportunities.

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