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Disability and its Addressing Terminologies: A Dialogue for Inclusion

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Abstract

The concept of disability is wide and multifaceted. It denotes various social responses towards persons with disability. It recognizes the physical differences, physical deficit and points out the attitude, treatment and trend of the society towards them. It uses various terminologies to address the disabled people, and to identify them in a particular manner for e.g. the British UPIAS lead social model uses term 'disabled people', while US version of social model of disability uses term, 'the person with disability'. While the medical model of understanding, argues to use 'persons with impairment'. This paper is divided into three parts: the first section would discuss the concept of disability, second portion would have a robust analysis on the various addressing terminologies from the world around, like 'the persons with disability', 'persons with impairment', 'the disabled people' etc. finally there will be a logical conclusion followed by the above discussion including some original contribution of author.

Keywords: disability, medical, social, physical

Introduction

The concept of disability is very wide and multifaceted term in the disability discourse. It is a fundamental question in the disability studies and most controversial point for the academicians of this field. The term 'disability' came into light in enlightenment era. At that time, it was viewed in a negative sense and it was used to define the people who were not eligible to work in industry physically. This categorization triggered the beginning of 'able people and disabled people'. After the second world war the concept of disability was used for the war affected people or the people who have lost their limbs. Till 1970, the disability was viewed as physiological term. But the letter of Paul hunt brings a new or social explanation of disability in 1972. This letter to the guardian news paper, argues that the people who are physically different are not disabled in real sense, but the people who are excluded from the main stream society are disabled. The idea of social disability was crystallized in 1976 when the UPIAS published 'the fundamental principle of disability' and argued that people are not disabled by their body, but the society who makes them disable through their exclusive practices (UPIAS 1976). In the process to define and identify in the so called normal society the academia, law of the various states use different terminologies according to their respective political philosophy for instance, the United State of America's 'The American with Disability Act 1990' used 'The Persons with disability' to address the people who are disabled. The United Kingdom calls them 'disabled people' except these two, there is another ideological and clinical framework which prevails in western countries, argue to use 'persons with impairment' (ICIDH, 1980). Thus this piece of writing aims to explore the concept of disability.

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Secondly, it would have grand debate over addressing terminologies and their philosophical trend. Finally, there would be a robust conclusion followed by original contribution.

What is disability?

This is fundamental and moot question of disability studies. After 50 years of disability discourse, the very question on the definition of disability cannot be settling down. Mainly there are two dominant views regarding this arcane question. First is known as 'Medical Model,' which believes that disability is a disease, which caused the body like defective limbs, lack movement etc. consequently a person is functionally limited and marginalized in the society (Oliver, 1990). Other model is famous as 'The social model' which argues that disability is socially created (UPIAS, 1976). The medical model is run by health agencies like World Health Organisation (WHO), states' Medical Department, Hospitals, Doctors Etc. The social model is represented by the organisations of disabled and perceived by the people with disability.

Disability as Individual Phenomena

In the pre-enlightenment era, the disability was defined by the religious view. According to them, this is the direct consequence of displeasure of god. The people with disability were viewed as 'sin symbol' in the society. Thanks to enlightenment, which advocated for human rationality and marked the establishment of industry. This two landmarked development broke the religious belief with regard to the disability. The new tradition gave birth to individualism, logical and scientific development of humanity. In this era, the concept of disability came in public domain, when the industry started to look society in its utility principle. The industrial view defines the society exclusively in two category. The first category; one who could work for industry was characterised as Abled-People, and those who could not work, was defined as Disabled-People (Janiffer,). Thus the concept of 'Disabled and Unable People' came in practice.

The rational and individual thinking viewed 'disability' as tangible term and propounded the ideas of physiological disability. This physiological definition later on known as medical model of disability. The model believes that 'disability' is an individual matter. It emanates from the imperfect body of individuals. It poses challenges to an individual in the society and restrict him/her from free movement in open environment.

In 1980, the WHO had produced the concrete explanation of medical zed disability. This explanation come across as 'International Classification of Disability and Handicap' "ICIDH 1980". The description accepts tripartite distinction of Harish 1971. In which document WHO pointed out that there are two situation first 'Impairment' which determines the physical structure of an individual and second 'Disability' which marks the inability of individuals to perform the daily routine activities in their lives. These two meticulous situation lead to the 'Handicap'. This 1980 "ICIDH" was revised in 2001. In this fresh manuscript WHO revised its previous explanation of disability and replaced with International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health "ICFDH", this innovative portrayal believes that 'Disability' is a health deficit and ontologically functional limitation. This definition could not sustain at the International Disability Movement and finally repealed by the United Nation Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability "U.N.C.R.P.D." 2007). Where there was heavy emphasis to change the structure and make accessible to all (U.N.C.R.P.D. 2007). In brief, we can argue that the medical model of

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disability has diagnostic understanding to explore the disability. It is purely clinical in nature and based on tangible facts. It follows a logical diagnosis and prove the defectiveness of a part of individual's body.

Disability as Collective Phenomena

The decade of 1970s marked the paradigm shift in the disability discourse. In 1972, Paul Hunt wrote a letter to the guardian newspaper and call for a formation of union to assert their rights. This individuals' announcement encourage and finally the Union of Physically impairment against Segregation "UPIAS" was established. This organisation has credit to introduce the social explanation of disability. This vision of disability was famous as 'social model of disability' which was crystallised and popularised by the work of Vick Finkelstein and Michael Oliver. Finkelstein is considered as father of this model and Michael Oliver is famous as spreader. Basically the UPIAS published its document 'Fundamental Principle of Disability' in 1976. In this document, union assert that 'disability is created by the society and practiced by the people' (UPIAS 1976). Further they argue that 'nobody born with disability' it is constructed phenomena and act of imposition and crystallisation of society on the name of naturalisation (UPIAS, 1976, Oliver, 1990).

The second thesis of social model is, 'disability' is a collective phenomena. As Michael Oliver wrote in his seminal work "the politics of Disablement, 1990" that disability affects to each and every people who are physically different and medically abnormal. Further this understanding believes that the individualisation of disability is conspiracy against the unity of disabled people, because it is not individual phenomena as medical sociologists argued (Oliver, 1990).

The social model is divided roughly in two version. One is known as U.S.A. version who believes that 'disability' is a part of a body while the second British version believes that 'disability' is not only part of body but it represents the body. Therefore, British authors criticise the U.S.A. addressing terminology "The Persons with Disability" and argued to use 'Disabled People' universally. In brief, it can be debated that the birth of social model gave rise to the right based approach in the field of disability studies. They advocated for the disabled rights and social explanation rather than physical rationalization. It believes that people are not 'disabled' by birth but they are developed by the society through its exclusive practices (UPIAS, 1976, Oliver, 1990, Finkelstein, 1980, Barnes and Mercer, 2004).

Various Addressing Terminologies

In the process of selecting the people, the society has developed some mechanism and terminologies to address them. These terminologies have ideological ground which reflects in their philosophical stand. Like the Medical understanding is extremely individualist in nature. It believes in body perfection mentality. Whilst, the British Social Approach is completely opposite to them. British author of disability field argue that 'disability' is a collective phenomenon and collective identity of disabled people, therefore they call unlike medical approach 'Disabled People'. But there is U.S.A. version of social model who believe that undoubtedly the 'disability' is socially imposed restriction on the people, but this part of individuals. Therefore, the appropriate term to address them is 'persons with disability'.

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Historically the people with physical disability were defined by the term handicap. Which denotes the functional limitation and social disadvantage of an individual (ICIDH, 1980). According to this document 'handicapness' is consequence of impairment and disability. W.H.O explained in 1980 that 'handicap' represents both these situations of individuals. Furthermore, this organisation established that the physical cause of an individual and social disadvantage lead to the handicap. Initially it was medical in nature but Bickenbach (1993) wrote that handicap is a social oriented term which has three components, prejudices, stereotype and discrimination. With this argument he elaborated that 'handicapism' is socially created and practically imposed on the individuals (1993).

In the present scenario this term has marginalised, because U.N.C.R.P.D. has advised to use the term called 'Persons with Disability' rather than using others. Nevertheless the Indian laws frequently use this terminology in their institutional practices. For example Mental Health Act (MHA), 1987 used this term and others subsequent parliamentary legislative like Rehabilitation Council of India Act (RCIA), 1992, Persons with Disability Equal opportunity, protection of rights and full participation Act (PWDA), 1995. And National Trust Act (NTA), 1999. According to the Indian legislation it expresses inability in medical terms. For example all the above mentioned acts have listed some conditions like Blindness, Low-Vision, Hearing handicap, mentally retarded, mentally ill, multiple disability etc. finally we can say that Indian laws' definition and addressing terminologies are taken from the medical understanding. But the latest development is more positive, because there are some institutions like Department of Education, Delhi University has started to use Visually Disabled instead of Visually Handicap.

The Persons with Impairment

This term is given by the followers of Medical Model. They perceive the clinical understanding of society. They justify the prescriptive society rather than free and fair society. In the case of disability, they believe that it is 'mishappening with individuals'. They firmly believe that the impairment of individuals creates the situation where people are not free to move, free to exercise their rights, free to access the society and less opportunity to mingle with people. The second main thesis was that the participation of individuals based on the capacity of individuals. As Relational Model 'Nordic Model' argued that society function on the everyday interaction of the individuals and the disabled are lacking in it. Consequently, they are at the marginalised position in the society. In short, it may be argued that after the extreme criticism, the medical model of disability has a dominant position in the society. Even in the welfare society or social world the medical model still provides a base to get benefits and fix criteria for the people who are lacking behind in terms of access of necessary facilities and rights.

The Persons with Disability

The concept of 'Persons with Disability' is given by U.S.A. socialists. They argue that all the individuals are independent elements of society therefore they have the right to assert their human rights, necessary freedom and others which are inhabitable in the process of life. Further they defined 'disability' as social consequences similar to British Disabled Socialists. But they differed when they argue that 'disability' is an integral part of human body and reject the British argument that 'disability' does not represent the body but body presents the

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disability. Thus they advocacy to use term 'Persons with Disability' even this is widely used in majority of the Countries of the world like USA, UK, India, South Africa, Germany, France Australia etc. These states' legislations have argued that there is a strong need to establish the independent identity of individuals. Therefore, they criticised British understanding of disability, because they under mined the individual autonomy. In brief, there are some clear assessment that the term 'Persons with Disability' is most appropriate and widely used by the countries and academicians. Secondly, it is balanced and inclusive version of disability studies, because it produces balanced view of disability. It recognises the individual autonomy and legitimises the experiences of disabled.

The Disabled Persons

The term 'Disabled People' is given the British Social Modelists like Vick Finkelstein, Michael Oliver, Colin Barnes etc. these authors argue that the identity of the people is disability, there they are not 'Persons with Impairment as Medical Socialist argued, they are not 'Persons with Disability' as American socialists advocated but they are disabled people. Subsequently, these British socialists claim that 'disability' express the actual attitude of society with regard to the People with Disability. In the 21st century, the British social model is criticised, because of its absoluteness. Prominent author Tom Shakespeare wrote in his great work "The Disability Rights and Wrongs 2006" that this understanding has diluted the physical condition and over emphasized the social barriers (Shakespeare, 2006).

Terming Divyang

After the 27december 2015 Man Ki Bat Programme, the persons with disabilities are expected to term as 'Divyang' in India. The terminology drawn from the analogy of functioning of disabled people. As P.M. Modi has explained in his man ki bat speech that when, he saw a persons with disability, he was working efficiently being a disabled/impaired body person. Then he could derive an analogy that this particular disabled person and all the persons with disabilities are having some divine qualities in their life. And concluded P.M. concluded them 'divyang' rather than persons with disabilities in English language and 'viklang' in Hindi language. Through this way it has sparked of anew discourse in the disability discourse. That how disability is conceptualised in Hindu practices, Christian values and how Islam treat them. But the scholars, activists and practitioners of disability field have vehemently registered their opposition. Even most of the NGOs like Crosse the hurdle have expressed their disagreement with terminalisation of disability as divyang' in Hindi language and 'persons with divine body' in English language. The opposition made by scholars, activists and n.g.os are on following grounds, firstly, the government of India has signed and ratified the United nation convention on rights of persons with disability 2006, where, it is clearly mandated that the persons with disability is universal and most suitable umbrella terminology for all the disabled people around the world. Secondly, the convention gives emphasis on identification of barriers and removing obstacles faced by disabled people rather than wasting time on to give terminology and bracketing them in certain segregated category. Thirdly, the scholars from disability field have taken seriously note of it, the; Divyang' translation in English language 'person with divine body' in their analytical account. Further they are describing 'divyangisation of disability' as pushing three hundred years back disabled people. When the enlightenment has broken the religious and conservative understanding of society with regard to the people with disabilities and

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successfully establishes the rationality of human beings in general. Thus the 'divyang' might be able to bring pre-enlightened understanding of disability in its legal framework. In present scenario, there are three grave concern regarding the discourse of disability, first, the negative image of disability, because all the religions have associated with ignorant, is going to be become real and governmental understanding of disabilities, which would break the mission of 'sugmya Bharat' accessible India campaign not only politically but socially, second, the disability will be the confined subject of religious interpretation rather than state subject, and open for discussion, third, The Divyang perspective would abolish the effort of government, social restructuring of society, transformation in the attitudes of the non-disabled people towards persons with disabilities in India. Because, we the people with disabilities are very much aware about the rural setup of disability which we do not want to acknowledge as our actual image of disability. Even, it violates the present Rights of persons with disability bill 2016. Without any constitutionality the minister for minister of social justice and empower has used repeatedly in the parliament. Being highest democratic institution it could not stop our minister from unconstitutional language. In short, it is earnest request of scholars with disabilities and activists to the government for rolling back the horse of divyangisation of disability and bring it in actual social arena rather than separating from human framework and withdrawing the citizenship from persons with disabilities.

Conclusion

After the above short discussion, we can deduce some concrete logic like the concept of disability was created by the industrial view of utility. Secondly, the term disability was used to define the people with inability to perform the daily activities. Thirdly, after the Second World War, this concept was used for war affected people. Fourthly, the era of 1970s gave social explanation of disability. Fifthly, the WHO gave concrete medical definition of disability in 1980. Its revised and reformed version was published in 2001 which inculcated the social aspect of disability. Sixthly, it can be argued that the introduction of disability studies legitimised the experiences of disabled individuals and forced to the mainstreamed society to relook into the social discursive construction of societal norms and traditions which reflects in UNCRPD, 2007. It also denotes that the terminologies which are used to address the people with disability are oriented their political tradition. For instance the concept of disabled people express the more collective and sociological view whilst the concept of persons with disability express the American individualist thinking. The persons with impairment represents the clinical and medicine view of society. It believes in the prescriptive mode of society and directive code of construction. Finally, we can argue that 'disability' has multiple explanation and it demands an in depth theoretical research as well as practical approach to analyse the addressing terminologies and its construction like differently abled. This recent development in 21st century. This show the positive linguistic mode of globalised society but show the trend of exclusion, because the spirit of this term to address some identified people. But in real and practical sense all the people are differently abled according to their respective capacity. The other latest development is 'challenged' like visually challenged, orthopaedic challenged etc which do not make any sense, because all the people are interdependence and facing challenged from various sense. In the end, particularly, it can be argued that we need to develop a coherent theory which should be

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balance and consequence of both social model and medical model including the UN approach. Here I do suggests 'The Objective Model of disability' this model would have continuous target to achieve in the lives of disabled for example independency, better economic life, greater social status, equal recognition in the society and equal treatment in the formulation of laws.

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