INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW

MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 5 | Issue 4

2022

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Media and People with Disabilities: An Analysis from Sociological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

I would try to point out in this paper how the media depict the issue faced by vulnerable groups in Indian society and what improvements are recorded by the media for disability, and how it has influenced public perceptions towards disabled people or how disabled groups are excluded and discriminated against in India through the media. This analysis is both qualitative and explanatory and is focused on theoretical discussion. The paper is entirely written on the basis of secondary sources. The oppressed community within society, subjugated by a hegemonic social system, is simply understood by people with disabilities. At different times and locations, various words have been used by people with disabilities. In influencing the public view of disability, the representation of disabled persons in the media plays a major role. Perceptions expressed in the media directly impact the way people with disabilities in today's culture are viewed.

Keywords: Media, Disability, Exclusion, Discrimination.

I. INTRODUCTION

The media is a powerful instrument of public opinion formation. In its different types, whether it be newspaper, film, radio, television, internet, magazines, posters, theatre, sculpture, dance, public reports or studies. The media can build or disturb public opinion, form attitudes and catalyse social action. It has the ability, among other things, to initiate processes of the group thought, deflect community interests, allow group forming, and provoke social action (mc Combs,2004). In their distribution of news, evidence and expert commentary, newspapers provide a regular basis for the creation of public opinion. The job of the media is not to tell people what to think, it is aptly said, but to tell people what to think about following this.

Disability-related news is simply about what or how much disability media reports, their topics, perspective on services, incidents, challenges, activism, empowerment, or just about anything for the cause of those affected individuals. A part of our culture is people with disabilities. They're just like us. They want to live completely, and they want to be supportive. But they face obstacles to inclusion because of the limitations caused by their state of health, and their

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needs are also given low priority. People with disabilities usually compete for the chance to get an education and get a career, suffer abuse and discrimination, and have limited involvement in political and social life. According to the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO) (2011), there are more than a billion people living with some type of disability, or around 15 per cent of the world's population. The prevalence of disability raises concerns both on a global scale and in different nations.

The World Disability Report (World Bank and WHO, 2011) revealed that globally, the number of people with disabilities is rising. It stems from population ageing and the rise of chronic diseases, as well as from environmental changes, natural disasters, road accidents, wars, diet and drug abuse. There are 2.68 crore people with disabilities in India, according to the 2011 Census (who constitute 2.21 per cent of the total population). Of the total population of disabled people, about 1.50 crore are male, and 1.18 crore are female. This includes people with visual, hearing, voice, and locomotor impairments, mental illness, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, and other disabilities.

Disabilities are an umbrella term for the World Health Organisation, including impairments, limits of movement, and constraints on participation. Impairment is a problem in operation or structure of the body; a limitation of behaviour is a challenge experienced by an individual in performing a task or action, whereas a restriction of involvement is a problem encountered by an individual in life circumstances. Thus, disability is not only a health problem. It is a dynamic phenomenon that represents the relationship between the characteristics of the body of an individual and the characteristics of the culture he or she lives in. Disability, with varying definitions for different cultures, is a disputed notion. It can be used to refer to the physical or mental features that certain institutions (the medical model) see as needing to be changed, particularly medicine. It can refer to the constraints imposed by the constraints of a capable society (the social model) on individuals. Or, to refer to the identification of people with disabilities, the word can serve.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current paper deals with the principle of labelling & stigma. The collective interests of society are reflected in the mass media. Journalists do not merely report on such data, but they comment on that data in a way that is intended to reflect public opinion. They reflect individuals' collective decisions about what is good and bad, reasonable or immoral, natural and deviant. Mass media can also report on certain categories of individuals branded by the rest of society and can also strengthen the labels they earn. The media itself does not establish

labels, but it certainly influences them. One of the theories used in this analysis is the Labelling Theory. The author aimed to analyse the findings through this theory and sought to explain how the press took part in the labelling process of people with disabilities. Mass media can also report on certain categories of individuals labelled by the rest of society and can also reinforce the labels they receive. The media itself does not create labels, but it certainly influences them. The labelling theory, explained by American sociologist Howard Becker, argues that people's actions are judged and "labelled" by others' reactions. In a group, there are certain persons that have greater power to apply labels than others. "In response to all sorts of actions and behaviour, labels are placed on individuals and groups by others." For example, if the presence or actions of certain individuals are perceived as inadmissible or as a deviation from the standard, individuals apply labels to them. Becker argued that all groups of people build laws and attempt to impose them on others at times and under some conditions. These laws define, in their view, what kind of actions and behaviour are "right" and what kind of actions and behaviour are "wrong." Other individuals can see a person who breaks these rules as a special kind of person who cannot be trusted to follow the rules accepted by the community. "He is known to be an "outsider". An individual who has been marked as deviant by other individuals in the community tends to be cut off from involvement in this group, according to Becker. It can be challenging for him to comply with other laws that he has no intention or desire to violate. The theory of labelling confirms that people's rules of conduct are socially constructed since "definitions of deviant behaviour vary over time and place, people have to decide what is deviant." Labelling theory also implies that these laws are not applied equally and fairly because, while they have not violated rules, certain persons may be regarded as criminals. Besides, various groups of individuals may judge multiple items to be deviant. It is also difficult to decide what kinds of behaviour are viewed in our culture as deviant.

The majority of vivid examples of deviation are acts that trigger condemnation, such as rape and murder, for example. For the classification of individuals with disabilities, the term of deviant may also be used. Disability is known as a societal standard deviation, and the label is applied to people with disabilities. For those individuals who unexpectedly become disabled may be viewed differently by people they met before their disability. A description of the idea of stigma can be found in the book by Erving Goffman called "Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity" (1963). According to Goffman, stigma is used to refer to a trait of a person that, for example, makes him different from others, making him totally poor, risky, or weak. The person who possesses this attribute can be considered to be corrupted and discounted. The stigma "constitutes a particular discrepancy between virtual and actual social

identity," which causes the person to be cut off from society. Virtual social identity is a character that can be falsely attributed to the individual, whereas a real social identity implies the characteristics that he actually possesses. Three distinct forms of stigma exist, according to Goffman. The first type is different physical deformities; the second type is individual character defects, such as weak will, dominant or pathological passions, treacherous and rigid values, and dishonesty; the third type of stigma is race, country, and religious stigma. In a group, there may be different attitudes towards individuals with stigma. Because of the belief of others that they are not quite human, they can be subjected to variations of prejudice or treated with contempt. In certain cases, individuals who are stigmatised may try to correct what they see as the basis for their failure. For example, a physically deformed person performs a plastic procedure, or an eye treatment is done by a blind person. By making a lot of effort to learn various fields of activity, which he finds inaccessible to him because of his shortcoming, the stigmatised person can also try to improve his condition. The lame person who learns to swim, ride and play tennis, for example, or the blind person who knows to ski and climb, maybe the lame person.

People with stigma can also experience "sympathetic others" who can communicate their point of view in the world and believe that they are normal individuals. Those referred to by Goffman are people with the same stigma and "wise" individuals who view stigmatised individuals as ordinary individuals, such as medical staff or their families and friends. People who have the same stigma may give advice to individuals or listen to their complaints. They can also appear as "speakers" before different regular and "stigmatised" audiences. They will demonstrate their successes, and how they have heroically coped with adaptation. Due to the common representation of disability as a symbol of failure and dependency, people with various health impairments can be vulnerable to stigmatisation. Physical deformities may be viewed by healthy people as a danger to their own well-being and wellbeing. They may, therefore, attempt to avoid a meeting with a person with a disability. As a consequence, people with disabilities may feel excluded from the group.

III. CONCLUSION

This segment has shown how the vast majority of disability data in the mass media is overwhelmingly negative. In books, films, on television, and in the news, disabling assumptions that medicalise, patronise, criminalise and dehumanise disabled people abound. They shape the bedrock on which disabled people's behaviours, assumptions and aspirations are based. They are central to the discrimination and abuse that people with disabilities face on

a daily basis and make a major contribution to their systemic exclusion from mainstream community life. It is also clear that recent efforts to address the problem and 'normalise' disabled people by certain elements in the media would only partially fix the issue.

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