

Personal Disability or Social Inability – Social Construction Interpretation and Community Partnership for Welfare of PWDs

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Abstract

Disability is a complex phenomenon, involving different dimensions. This paper examines the historical move from the individual-medical model through welfare to social environmental interpretation of disability and its international consensus, and the provisions of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which also stipulates disability as more or less a social construct and the value of bringing community as a key partner into the framework of action to ensure equal position of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in society. This paper briefly looks at longstanding progressive attention to the welfare of PWDs in Sri Lanka as well. Based on the overall discussion, it concludes that making the community an active partner in the holistic action of the State, and enabling an open-door participatory structure as a community-based physical space to connect PWDs and their families to wider community sphere brings a range of pragmatic benefits to PWDs and connect them together as purposive self-help groups that advocate for and promote actions for their overall welfare, with social justice and equal inclusion in society, and become vigilant grass-roots watchdogs on monitoring progress.

Keywords: *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, Medical Model, Welfare Model, Social Model, Social Interpretation, Community Space*

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