

Oguzkaan Schools JMUN SOCHUM Committee



Issue :
Advancing the Rights
of People with
Disabilities

Forum: SOCHUM

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I. Introduction

It is important to start understanding the issue by recognizing some statistics provided by the World Health Organization (WHO): About 15% of the world's population (more than 500 million people) lives with some form of disability. 2-4% of them experience significant difficulties in functioning. These disabilities have varieties such as physical, mental and sensory impairments. Despite having same rights and advantages, many handicapped people encounter barriers formed by the society. The unconscious segment of a community rejects differences and they exclude disabled people. These barriers cause disabled people to face difficulties in their lives. As defined by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these difficulties include transportation, communication, education, etc. Governments can be held responsible; however, the actions of the society directly affect the well-being of handicapped people.

II. Definition of Key Terms

Disability: A disability is a permanent injury, illness, or physical or mental condition that tends to restrict the way that someone can live their life.

Handicapped People: People with disabilities.

Wheelchair: A chair with wheels that you use in order to move if you cannot walk properly.

Deaf: Lacking the power of hearing or having impaired hearing.

Braille Alphabet: A system of writing and printing for blind or visually impaired people, in which varied arrangements of raised dots representing letters and numerals are identified by touch.

Impairment: According to Emory University School of Medicine “The words ‘impairment’ ‘disability’ and ‘handicap’ are often used interchangeably. They have very different meanings.” and impairment is “any loss or abnormality of psychological or anatomical structure or function.” Therefore, it is important to use these words at their correct places during debate as well.

Personal Mobility: This phrase is used to describe the accessibility of transportation of a human being. Since transportation is one of the important struggles the disabled people face, their personal mobility must be immediately provided.

Welfare System: The system is provided by the government in order to ensure that the citizens are comfortable and well. Protection, economic well-being and social comfort are some of the necessities of welfare. A state providing this system is also known as a welfare state.

III. General Overview

The abuse shown towards the disabled population is unfortunately present in every type of institution (governmental and private) such as but not limited to care institutions, schools and workplaces. This abuse isolates the handicapped from daily life and makes it harder for them to adjust to daily life. However, most importantly, if governments fail to meet the needs of the disabled, no other institutions, establishments will respect the rights secured by treaties. The following part of this section will be divided according to the rights that are being violated.

a) The Right to Housing and to Live Independently

The housing issue for the disabled people can be analyzed in two different aspects: Insufficient housing and inadequately designed housing. The first aspect is the poor people lacking financial support to own their own houses or access to permanent care houses. Because of employment problems and lack of possibilities, the disabled people often lack a proper shelter. Therefore, this situation causes the prevention of personal independence. On the other hand, there are complaints from the disabled community that the houses are badly-designed, thus their actions are limited within the house. Some sample issues faced are the lack of lift, narrow doors, unfit showers, etc. Even though permanent care homes exist all over the world, they are overpriced.

b) The Right to Education

The World Health Organization and the World Bank estimate that one billion people experience some form of disability. Of those, it is estimated that 93 to 150 million are children. There are several factors affecting the education of a disabled child. However, with the right infrastructure and awareness, these challenges can easily be overcome.

The first factor is the correct differentiation of a child who should be educated in a specially-programmed school and a child who can easily adjust to normal school conditions. This is quite significant since it is known that specially educated children are further segregated from the society.

The second factor is the accessibility of a school building because in most of the cases, mobility of disabled children is disregarded while the school is built.

Finally, one of the biggest problems is that the prejudices against the disabled people cause the disabled children to be bullied and excluded from their peers. To encourage students with disabilities to pursue

education, accessibility and adaptability must be introduced in public education centers. Solutions to the issue would include;

- The Sign Language should be learned by teachers for those of impairment in hearing.
- The study resources should be translated into the Braille Alphabet.
- The education centers should introduce penalties in any case of social segregation against the students with disabilities.
- Education centers should be easily accessible.

c) The Right to Equal Employment

In many countries within the UN, the rate of unemployment gap between disabled people and the able-bodied stand out. In 2017, 18% of people with a disability were employed within the US, in contrast to the employment ratio for the able-bodied was 65%.

The main reason of the gap is the employers' prejudice. 1 in 3 employers say that they do not hire people with disabilities because they cannot perform required job tasks.

This problem is regarding the lack of flexibility or especially reserved quota of a workplace. Even though some handicaps make it almost impossible for the person to be employed in a specific sort of business, there are many disabled people who can easily adjust to normal work-conditions. It is also essential for a workplace to be diverse in terms of its employees and this can only be implemented by preventing stereotyping and not underestimating the capabilities of a disabled person.

d) The Access to Adequate Public Transportation

Access to public transportation could be considered the biggest issue for people with disabilities in our century. Without accessible transportation, many people with disabilities simply cannot get to school or the

workplace, hindering their full participation in society. With new properties, examples include;

- A lift or ramp to board a bus can be helpful for people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices, elderly people who cannot climb stairs safely, or a parent pushing their child in a stroller.
- A reader board on a bus will provide access to spoken announcements for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or for any passengers who miss the announcement when the bus is crowded and loud.
- Audio announcements of upcoming bus stops for people who have visual disabilities or for inexperienced travelers who need help identifying their stop.
- Curb-cuts make pedestrian pathways accessible for people using wheelchairs or other wheeled devices such as walkers, strollers, or rolling luggage.

e) Treatment & Health

Access to proper and adequate healthcare is also a major problem for the disabled. The World Health Organization (WHO) revealed in a survey that between 35% and 50% of people in developed countries, and between 76% and 85% in developing countries, received no treatment in the year prior to the study. To top all of, the disabled are even excluded from some mandatory health checks and programmes such as cancer scanning. However, some countries like the United States of America (USA) offer insurances like Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Medicare granting the disable a privilege in terms of sufficient healthcare not only regarding their handicap but their health in general.

IV. Important Events & Chronology

| Date (Day/Month/Year) | Event |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 30 November – 6 December 1981 | The non-governmental organizations participated in DPI (Disabled Peoples' International) |
| 26 July 1990 | The George W. Bush administration legislated ADA (the Americans with Disabilities Act) in 1990 providing equal opportunities to the disabled population by prohibiting the discrimination against it. |
| 3 December 1992 | The first International Day of People with Disabilities was held in order to promote international observance. |
| March 1995 | In Copenhagen, the World Summit for Social Development was held and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development were adopted. |
| December 2001 | Ad Hoc committee was created by the proposal of Mexico. |
| 13 December 2006 | The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol were adopted in the United Nations Headquarters (New York) |
| 23 December 2010 | European Union became the first intergovernmental organization to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons |

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| | with disabilities. |
| 2010 | Equality Act was put into action in the United Kingdom. |
| 9 June 2011 | The World Report on Disability, which was a first in terms of reports, was created in conjunction with WHO. |
| 2014 | Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was published. |
| 15 June 2017 | The rights of Persons with Disabilities were put forward in India. |

V. Involved Organizations

a) World Health Organization (WHO)

In general, The World Health Organization aims to increase knowledge and awareness on topics regarding general health, well-being; suggests proposals and resolutions, making it the most relevant organization to the issue at hand. By putting forth many publishing online such as subject-specific guidelines, action plans, informative reports, they provide very comprehensive resources to everyone with internet access. Furthermore, WHO acts as an advisor to governments, so they can securely gather data as well as providing rehabilitation centers which are fully equipped with the necessities of the disabled people.

b) International Disability Alliance

Working in more than 200 countries, the International Disability Alliance covers a wide zone. Furthermore, the alliance hosted its first Global Disability Summit in the United Kingdom in July 2018. Alongside

working in cooperation with the United Nations, International Disability Alliance forms guidelines for both relevant NGOs and countries.

c) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The UNHCR is known to have subject-specific reports and have taken actions regarding disabled refugees. In the specific rural zones such as Afghanistan, they are running livelihood programmes that include vocational trainings as well as special education programmes. However, since they are not present in every refugee camp, their actions are very limited.

d) UN Enable

Also known as UNDESA (Department of Social and Economic Affairs Division for Inclusive Social Development), this division of the UN performs actions for the disabled people to be more inclusive in everyday life. While gathering statistics, UN Enable also organizes summits and conferences for the countries to reevaluate their actions.

VI. The Disabled Rights in the Specified Countries

a) The United States of America

The constitution of the United States of America guarantees equal protection to every citizen in spite of features they may have such as disability, race or gender. It promises the 54 million disabled citizens within its borders to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities any:

- Education
- Work Places
- Public Program
- Private housing

Studies have suggested that women who experience forms of developmental disabilities are 4 to 10 times more likely to experience an assault than other women in America. Children with disabilities also experience a high risk of abuse. Young people with disabilities are 1.5 to 3.5 times more likely to experience neglect and abuse.

b) The United Kingdom

In a recent study, August 2017, the UN Committee stated that the UK is in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. After a year from the CRPD Committee's study, some progress has been made on the UK government's part.

The disabled population in the United Kingdom accounts for almost 20% of the total population. Thus, effective measures surely should be taken. Offering many benefits (financial help programs, housing, tax and salary support) and financial help to the handicapped population, the United Kingdom takes its place among the best places for a disabled person to live in. Meanwhile, disabled people across the UK still continue to face restrictions of their rights to an adequate standard of living and social protection and to live independently and be included in the community.

A research conducted by the Opinium declares that the disabled people need to apply for 60% more jobs than non-disabled jobseekers before they find work. There have been a considerable number of research projects focusing on disabled people's standard of living and social protection. The findings of this research show the disproportionate and adverse effect of welfare reform on disabled people's rights to independent living and to an adequate standard of living and social security. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that 30% of people living in a household with a disabled person live in poverty, compared to 19% of those in households without disabled person.

In the educational field, the studies show the dropout rates have been increasing non-stop for disabled students, every passing year. In 2018, a

research carried out by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign found that 40% of university inter-campus transport was inaccessible to disabled students while 30% of university social and leisure facilities were also not accessible to students with mobility impairment.

c) Russian Federation

In the grounds of Russian Federation, unemployment rate among citizens with disabilities is 32% in both full and part time work. In the recent years, the government has had a fund to support children with disabilities and assistance has been introduced to help people with disabilities to find work. The chief instrument is a State program, 'Accessible Environment' which has been extended from 2020 to 2025 and has had a budget of \$7.5 billion over ten years.

On the topic of education 21% of public schools are able to accommodate children with disabilities and speech therapy has been introduced in educational structures. It is said that the Russian sign language is universally recognized in the country and there has been a significant increase of television programmes with subtitles, in a report conducted by the UNHRC. In the report, it has been reported that the legislation has prohibited the violation of the rights of persons with disabilities and the \$7.6 billion has been invested into a barrier free environment by the Russian government.

In 2016, the Russian government initiated a medical and social support plan for the 20,000 persons with disabilities currently in prisons.

d) Germany

Germany is one of the most generous states on the subject of unemployed payments. German citizens who are unable to work due to illness or injury receive payments of 80% of their prior net earnings for up to 19 months. In some cases, 100% is paid. When the disability is long-term, individuals receive a pension (regardless of age). Those who are unable to work more than 20% due to work injury or an occupational disease (around 67 are

officially listed) are entitled to a pension equal to just over two-thirds of their previous year's earnings. Health insurance covers all medical care benefits, including the total cost of physical rehabilitation and necessary appliances. Those with a disability, who are unable to work more than three hours a day, are eligible for a disability pension. Those unable to work more than six hours a day are entitled to a partial pension. Disabled children are automatically insured with their parents in the health insurance scheme without having to pay any additional costs.

e) Egypt

In Egypt, the disabled citizens form on average 12% of the country, people with disabilities do not have full access to basic services which hinders their full inclusion in society.

Only 28.3% of people with disabilities have a primary school diploma, half of the national rate. The illiteracy rate among people with disabilities is 61% for males and 70% for females, double of the rate of illiteracy among people without disabilities. The employment rate of people with disabilities is reported to be half that of the non-disabled population, 21% compared 40% (although there are no official statistics). The government has a number of projects to encourage the employment of people with disabilities. People with disabilities receive money to purchase household products, wheelchairs and prosthetic devices. While handicaps can travel on government-owned mass transit buses free of charge, the buses are not wheelchair accessible.

f) Ghana

Unfortunately, the disabled population of Ghana is known to suffer more than the disabled population of any other country. This infamy engraved in everyone's memory when BBC aired a documentary about the horrific conditions the disabled have to live in. Thus, Ghana and many other African countries need special guidance on reforming legislation.

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

a) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Even though the convention is known to regulate many basic problems regarding the issue, it is apparent that it couldn't bring an end to solution completely. However, it is evident that the convention is the most complex written document ever on the issue in terms of its inclusiveness.

b) World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons

The resolution based on this programme was published on the 14th of December 1990. It aimed to change the perspectives of everyone by setting definitions of “handicap”, “disability” and “disabled”. This resolution has been very important step but it should be considered as a base or an initial step towards comprehending the problem.

VIII. Possible Solutions

Primarily, start by thinking about the life standards and daily activities non-disabled people have access to. These standards can be listed as economic freedom, shelter, food, transportation, health and so on. As a result, the aim must be to increase the life standards of the disabled people.

Programmes of vaccination and actions against diseases which might be infectious such as diphtheria, tetanus, tuberculosis should be implemented. These diseases cause permanent disabilities and even death. Thus, routine checks must be implemented by the Ministries of Health in each country. Even though in developed countries health checks and vaccinations are easily accessible, they are highly disregarded in rural and remote areas.

Awareness is one of the key solutions regarding this issue. Many people around the world are deprived of knowledge about the issue. Therefore, awareness campaigns and competitions mentioned in the resolution should mostly be directed to those remote parts that do not have access to knowledge.

Disabled people in refugee camps should be regarded as well, since let alone proper care, refugees barely have shelters. The actions of related NGOs could be extended by possibly adding special care facilities or assigning volunteering professional healthcare providers to refugee camps.

Relevant and professionally trained NGOs could assist governments in making decisions regarding any possible changes in the system and legislation.

The mobility of handicapped people should be a topic of extreme importance to the governments, specifically Ministries of Transportation. As in many developed countries, the disabled all around the world most have easy access to the public transports as well as taxis. In order to prevent this problem of accessibility, the number of elevators should be increased in number.

Consequently, the basic rights, secured by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must be easily applicable to every person including the disabled people.

IX. Letter from Chairs

Dear Delegates,

We genially welcome you all to the fourth annual edition of Oğuzkaan Schools Junior Model United Nations Conference (OSJMUN). Model United Nations conferences and MUN-based organizational events are such excellent fields to learn how to interact with people from different backgrounds and to enrich your compromising skills. It is a chance to advance the participants' academic skills and careers about the current situation of our world. After all, we would really like to wish you all a wonderful experience! Hopefully, you will have a great opportunity to fully enjoy the conference.

Consequently, regarding the agenda item, the topic is *Advancing the Rights of People with Disabilities*. The member states are expected to

present new strategies and solutions to fight with the violation of the rights of the citizens with disabilities.

Yours sincerely,

Irmak Demirtaş & Duygu Küçüktatlıdil

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