

The Objectives of Disability Studies

Dr. Sushil Kumar Mishra

*Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, SRM University, Sonapat, (Haryana)
India*

ABSTRACT

Disability studies are academic disciplines that examine the meaning, nature and consequences of disability as a social construct. Initially the field focused on the division between ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’, where impairment was an impairment of an individual’s mind or body, where as disability was considered a social construction. Two distinct models of disability are the social and medical models of disability. In 1999 the social model was universally accepted as the model preferred by the field. However, in recent years, the division between social and medical model has been challenged. Additionally there has been an increased focus on inter - disciplinary research.

Disability studies course include work in disability history, theory, legislation, policy, ethics and the arts. However, the students are taught to focus on the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities in practical terms. The field is focused on increasing individuals with disability access to civil rights and improving their quality of life.

Disability studies emerged in the 1980 in the US, the UK and Canada. In 1986, the section for the study of chronic illness, Impairment and Disability of the Social Science Association (United States) was renamed the Society for Disability Studies. The first US Disability studies program emerged in 1994 at Syracuse University.

Programs in Disability Studies should encourage a curriculum that allows students, activists, teachers, artists, practitioners and researchers to engage the subject matter from various disciplinary perspectives. Disability studies have steadily gained prominence over the past half century, moving expeditiously into the mainstream in historical and literary scholarship.

KEY WORDS: The Philosophy of Disability, Objectives, Applications and Ethics

INTRODUCTION

Disability Studies, an interdisciplinary area of study based in the humanities and social sciences that views disability in the context of culture, society and politics. This area of study presents a variety of perspectives on disability, from contemporary society as well as from a

range of cultures and histories. Disability studies have been started in many Universities to broaden the understanding of disability, to understand better the experience of disability in society and to contribute to social change for people with disabilities.

The Centre for Disability Studies and Action, established within the school of social work in 2006. It envisages focusing on issues and concerns of people with disabilities through teaching, training, research and demonstration; to work with, for persons with disabilities and all stakeholders in this field so as to enhance capacities in working towards an equitable and just society which will ensure equalization of opportunities, full participation and protection of dignity and rights of persons with disabilities.

The centre for disability studies and action is the first of its kind in a university in social work.

The UGC has advised the centre to initiate disability studies in other universities through consultation. The centre focuses on developing social work practices around the lives of persons with disability, with rights, strengths based perspective and equal partnership with persons with disability to facilitate multi-sectional intervention. The centre is currently working in coherence with the philosophy of United Nation's conventions for right for persons with disability.

'The United Nations' Conventions for Rights of persons with Disability deal with human right,

anti oppressive social work and people centered partnership practice to develop knowledge around disability studies with voices of people with disability. This may be done through evidence based research, building strategies alliances with non-governmental organizations for

effective practices towards inclusive policy. The centre is to train a cadre of social workers, professionals in the field of disability studies at various levels with capability and strength based approach and right based perspective to undertake research on current issues, emerging needs and socio-political context of persons with disability

Vision: To focus on issues and concerns of people with disabilities through teaching, training, research and demonstration and to work with disabilities. To enhance capacities of persons with disabilities towards an equitable and just society to ensure equalization of opportunities. To Protect dignity and rights of persons with disability.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop insight and knowledge on diverse needs of persons with disability and applying theory to practice to work at micro level with the strengths and rights based social work practice.
2. To gain knowledge and skills towards need based interventions for and with persons with disability and their accessibility for facilitating inclusion in society.
3. To be exposed to various perspectives in understanding disability, persons with disability and their families within their varied theoretical contexts and environments.
4. To apprehend, critique and analyze the complexes of the social realities of the field of disability, persons with disability and their families and the range of related

issues in their systematic and structural contexts.

5. To learn to be self aware, to innovate and to evolve an anti- oppressive, empowerment based micro and macro partnership practice for working with, through and for people with disability and various stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Disability Studies' roots are in the disability rights movement of the 1960s. In the United Kingdom the union of the physically impaired against segregation, formed in 1972, was instrumental in politicizing disability in the U.K. and abroad. In the United States the disability rights movement advocated for legislation relating to the civil rights of individuals with regard to employment, education and accessible transportation.

Inspired by UPIAS, the society of Disability Studies (SDS; originally section for the study of chronic illness, impairment and disability was started in 1982 by a group of American academics and activists.

While the political movements initially led social scientists to explorations of disability, Researchers in the arts and humanities have also taken up the study of disability. The inter discipline that characterizes the field, allows for a variety of methodologies and approaches to be applied to the study of disability. Philosophies of justice that speak directly to the interests of the disabled, narratives and analyses of the experience of living with a disability and how that intersects with race, class and gender.

References:

1. Society for Disability studies, Retrieved 26 March 2015.
2. Disability studies in Medical Education, Retrieved 19 October 2012.