

## SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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**Abstract:** *Social expulsion of people with disabilities represents a problem that is very frequently met in society, impairing their optimal attendance in the activities of the society in which they reside. According to speciality studies, to be a disabled person equates to isolation, discrimination, vulnerability and abuse aimed at their identity and self esteem (Glăvan, 2020). The main objective of any integrative activity is represented by a total inclusion of handicaped people. To reach that goal, it is necessary to resolve the social rejection received from society.*

**Key words:** *deficiency; disability; handicap; integration.*

### Introduction

Persons with disabilities are those persons whose social environment, not adapted to their physical, sensory, mental and/or associated deficiencies, totally stops or reduces their access to equal opportunities in society, requiring protection measures in support of social integration and inclusion (Law no. 448/2006, Art. 2.1).

Social exclusion of persons with disabilities signifies not only poor material resources, but above all their difficulties or inability to actually assist in economic, social, political and cultural life, or even alienation and distancing from ordinary society.

Professor Calin Zamfir defines disability as a person's disadvantage, as a result of a deficiency, or inability, that limits or prevents the total or partial performance of tasks considered normal for them, depending on age, gender, social, cultural factors (Zamfir, 1993).

The deficiency represents the medical aspect, representing the loss, anomaly, permanent or temporary disturbance anatomical or psychological structure and designates a pathological, functional, stable or long-lasting state that affects the ability to work, affecting the process

of adaptation and integration in the school environment, at work, in the community of which the person concerned is a member (Ponea, 2009). Disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional and contested and most of the time, social barriers and stigmatization become decisive factors in the process of integration both in society and in the professional life of people with disabilities (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2016). Disability is an umbrella term for the degree of deterioration, limitation of activity, restrictions on the individual's participation and contextual factors in his or her life (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2022).

Inability means the loss, partial or total diminution of physical, mental or sensory possibilities, the consequence of a deficiency that prevents the normal performance of certain activities.

Disability results from a deficiency or handicap that limits the performance of a role in a social, cultural context, it stems from the relationship between a disabled person and their living environment, being highlighted when these persons encounter barriers, preventing access to social activities or services (Gherguț, 2006).

People with disabilities, aware of their own handicap, rebel and try to get rid of the label that follows their existence. Until the condition of a disabled person is accepted, their road is much longer than the rest of the people (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2021).

The experience of rejection is very painful, to be rejected because of who you are, to have the feeling that people are bypassing you because you have a particular race, nationality, religion, social class or disability, is a great destructive suffering. Even the rejection by unknown and unseen persons, or in situations without concrete stakes, of being ignored in any discussion, can cause disturbances in self-esteem (André, 2010).

The integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities are conditions of respect for the rights of every citizen, the fundamental principles that have changed the realities in the field of quality of life, education and integration of persons with disabilities in social life have as their foundational human rights.

Integration implies that relationships between individuals are based on a recognition of their integrity, values and common rights. The relationship that is established between the individual and society is the basis of integration, which is carried out on several levels, from simple to complex (Popovici, 1999): physical integration, functional integration, social integration, personal integration, integration into society, organizational integration.

The ultimate objective of social integration is, in fact, a total inclusion of people with disabilities, and in order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the social rejection that these people face from society.

### **Research methodology**

A review of the specialized literature on the topic of social integration of people with disabilities was carried out, in the historical context of Romania.

### **Research results**

Challenges faced by people with disabilities

1. Accessibility of the physical environment – many people with disabilities face difficulties due to the lack of accessibility in public infrastructure (buildings, public transport, streets).
2. Discrimination and stereotypes – prejudice and misperceptions about disabilities can lead to social exclusion of these people from various fields, including education and employment.
3. Access to education – although legislation provides for access to education for persons with disabilities, in many cases schools are not adequately equipped and staff are not prepared to meet their special needs.
4. Employability – a majority of disabled people face prejudice when searching for a job due to lack of adaptability of employers and preconceptions about their capabilities.

Measures to promote social inclusion

1. Legislation and fundamental rights – the adoption and implementation of laws guaranteeing the rights of persons with special needs, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities, are essential to ensure their inclusion.
2. Accessibility of infrastructure – authorities must invest in adapting public buildings, transport and jobs to be accessible to people with disabilities by installing ramps, elevators and other facilities.
3. Inclusive education – schools must adopt educational methods adapted to the special needs of students with disabilities. They should focus on integrating them into regular schools with appropriate support (Gavrilă-Ardelean & Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2017).
4. Promoting employment for people with disabilities – employers should be encouraged to hire people with disabilities through financial incentives and policies to ensure an accessible and friendly working environment (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2017).
5. Public education and awareness – it is important to conduct public awareness and informational campaigns to combat stereotypes and discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Integration implies that relationships between individuals are based on a recognition of their integrity, values and common rights. When these values are not recognized, alienation and segregation between social groups are established. B. Nirje states that “integration is allowing yourself to be among others” (Albu & Albu, 2000). Otherwise,

integration represents the ability to entertain a healthy relationship between individual and society and can be analyzed considering multiple layers, from simple and becoming more complex as we go on. Therefore, we can talk about:

- Physical integration provides people with special requirements the ability to ensure their basic needs to survive, that is, to provide housing, to organize classes and train staff in regular schools, to profess in a multitude of fields, to work (in protected system).
- Functional integration takes into account the facilitated access of people with special requirements to freely use all of the facilities and services proposed by society, guaranteeing minimal comfort (for example: the use of public transport means, facilities for street access or in various public institutions).
- Social integration refers to the set of social relations a person with disabilities develops with others from their community (neighbors, coworkers, people on the street, civil servants).

Integrations into society strive to guarantee the equal rights and respect for the self-determination of a person with disabilities; organizational integration refers to organizational structures that support integration. According to the principles promoted in education by international bodies, as well as the provisions included in the Declaration of the Rights of persons with Disabilities, it is noted that persons/students with different types of disabilities have the same fundamental rights as other citizens of the same age, without the discriminations on any grounds, such as gender, religion, political beliefs, social or national origins, spoken language, financial status or any other characteristic of the person concerned or his family.

### **Conclusion**

The social integration of disabled people is one of the many social problems that society faces. Most disabled people don't benefit from equal opportunities in regards to healthcare, education, or employment, they don't benefit from certain services that people with special needs require, being thus excluded from the activities of everyday life.

Social inclusion of persons with disabilities is an essential concept for building a fair and just society. In recent years, the rights of persons with special needs have been increasingly recognized internationally, and many countries have made significant progress in ensuring equal access to education, work, health and other services. However, there are still many difficulties that need to be remedied in order to ensure the full integration of these people into social life.

The phenomenon of disability, stimulated by different factors: poor health, polluting environment, political instability, poverty, social exclusion, is manifested by the defective relationship between individual

and his environment. Disability is present in all types of societies, from all of them times and causes dissension at the system level. The existential picture of people disability in our country presents an integrative and unitary imbalance of society. Solving problems in the given field can be achieved through co-participation and adherence to this marginalized social group.

Social inclusion of persons with special needs is an important objective that requires the active involvement of authorities, educational institutions, employers and society as a whole. By implementing effective measures and changing mentalities, we can build a world where all people, regardless of their disabilities, have the same rights and opportunities to participate in social life.

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