How Can Ethnographic Studies Enhance Our Understanding Of Disability?

Posted on October 30, 2019

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Crippled Bodies and Sex

Beginning with our sexual selves, the association between handicaps and a sexless character is outstanding yet puzzling. For instance, why is it expected that a grown-up disabled lady should be treated as a kid? In a similar manner, why is it anticipated that the individuals with disabilities would rather not have sexual existences like their ordinary counterparts?

It isn't physically actual reality that says individuals who differ from characteristics of our bodies then they are the exception from the local statement. Many disabled people's bodies can hold conceptive prosperity, yet the generalization is handicapped individuals don't have sex, and their regenerative lives are a terrible concept. Stories of grown-up disabled kids in the general public domain are striking: individuals overlooking mentally unbalanced people, their grievances about strolling challenges, individuals with cerebral paralysis being excessively destitute, making it impossible to deal with their own finances. With regards to the regenerative rights, handicapped individuals are frequent casualties of pressured cleansings. At the point when people with incapacities do have children, they confront ramifications of having their kids constrained from their home since they're thought to be inadequate parents. Guardians with inabilities suffer stereotypes and shame due to speculations about sexual agency being related to physical capability.

Images and Memories of Ethnographic Recollections

Through pictures and memories, ethnography can investigate the impacts that current encounters through photographs have on how individuals recall their past and execute their present lives. This may challenge conventional thoughts regarding the passing of time, in which the ordering of events is divided into past, present, and future. The historical backdrop of debilitating qualities is loaded with logical inconsistencies. The historical backdrop of the connections of disabled researchers with nondisabled researchers also is loaded with illogicalities. Social and territorial varieties matter regarding the sorts of chronicled clarifications sought after. There's a great deal that isn't right with Western culture. So states Dan Goodley, creator of Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary

Introduction. Everyday businesses work for elites while disabling all of us. However, the societal obsession with social mobility, independence, and freedom is debilitating. There is nothing more devastating than our want of independence and capability. This book is about handicap, incapacity, and the human condition. It is fundamentally different to dissect what we mean by handicap in the neoliberal times that we live in. These are disabled circumstances.

What is Ethnography

Ethnography is a very misunderstood term. It portrays a group of strategies, including participatory perception and meetings, that frequently introduce themselves towards the researcher regarding the key convictions and practices of people made in a social context and driven by the fieldwork environment in which their research data is collected [1]. It is additionally used to depict the composed result of the study—the ethnographic record. A few reactions of ethnographic methods have been provided concerning observational studies in which the part of fieldwork has been written as an alternative research method. Apparently, a few methodologists think of ethnography as an intellectual word for depicting other methods rather than a complicated and in-depth data collection method. It is possible that ethnography can have no particular significance by either equating it with qualitative research or by characterizing it as an attempt to condense every single other thing into itself.

Thick Description

Thick description is a social science method that gives human behaviour context so that it can be better understood by an outsider. The term was first introduced by Gilbert Ryle (Ryle, G. 1949. The Concept of Mind. Chicago: Chicago University Press.) and later extensively discussed by Clifford Geertz in an influential article called Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture in the 1970s. Geertz included the term in his book The Interpretation of Cultures, in which he claimed that the role of an anthropologist was to explain and describe complex cultural details through thick description.

“Geertz said an ethnographer’s job is to observe, record, and analyze a culture. For him, culture is composed of psychological structures by which individuals or groups of individuals guide their behavior. He uses the example of “winking” as a cultural gesture. Geertz points out that winking is a social behavior that is culturally specific. For example, a wink can mean a conspiratorial signal, it can be a sign of flirtation, or of agreement, or anything else, depending on the culture of those involved and the social context in which the winking action occurs. The wink itself happens in a context that is a ‘public code’ and is well-understood within the winking culture. (Geertz, C. 1973 *Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.) The wink can be interpreted depending upon the context and familiarity with the culture (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).[2].

Origins Of Anthropology

Travel has driven progress since the most primitive times of the human age – yet simply like today, the most powerful effects spread from the tales told about adventures as opposed to the true understanding of people. The spirit was shipped across regions and oceans through the mode of the letters of merchants and ministers, mariners' records and overland voyages. The main anthropologists based their hypotheses on such reports as opposed to their perceptions. Voyagers' tales about other societies and cultures moulded the speculations about human progress proposed by the eighteenth-century French anthropologist Montesquieu. In his Spirit of the Laws (1748), the conduct and temperaments of Hindu people were accounted for regarding the atmosphere: the warmth was said to make them lazy and weak. In other words, their lives were controlled by factors outside their control (and they could be treated as substandard thus). Immanuel Kant and David Hume built up this focus and concluded that some people are naturally mediocre and are arranged in a chain of importance. The 'great chain of being', as it was known, was made as a God-given request that connected the common world from creatures at the base up to people, at that point to holy messengers lastly God at the pinnacle. This was a vertical grouping, and when such standards were connected on a level plane, it could give a religious model to the social and political disparities of innovatively propelled European men over unarmed, 'crude' people groups. 'Social Darwinism' is related to the interpretation of Charles Darwin's discoveries in such a way as to explain natural diversity and variety among humans (i.e. physical variety and disabilities). The 19th-century British anthropologist David Collins claimed the distinctive appearances of Africans, Asians and Europeans were changeless – and an indication of their different lives. However, his work was driven by a desire for radical diversity and a way of proving European superiority and justifying slavery [3]. This was the time of the 'armchair theorists.' Anthropologists would write their theories in their countries, particularly in the UK, based on stories they heard from missionaries and travellers. The stereotypes regarding people of colour were perpetuated till the time anthropologists began to conduct their fieldwork and started living among the people of different nations and races. Fieldwork gave researchers a chance to confront their stereotypes and limitations. [4].

Cultural anthropological work rose to significance in the US under the impact of Franz Boas. He tested the possibility that human conduct is innate. He demonstrated that human conduct was formed, and culture was the outcome of social reactions and actions. Besides, he further claimed that human diversity is an outcome of interactions and situational factors. It was a radical thought in that society that disabled individuals were not seen as human and further subjected to violence on ethnic, racial and other fundamental differences.

What is Culture

The definition of culture plays a crucial role in anthropology. The term 'culture' came to be associated with Anthropology in the 1870s when Edward Burnett Tylor used it as the title of his book Primitive

Culture. In primitive societies, social and physical impairments are considered the same. Greek society regarded disabled bodies as 'weak,' and therefore, disabilities are considered 'weakness' in those cultures. Tylor argued that culture includes art, traditions, customs, laws, religion, and knowledge that human beings acquire by living in societies. Tylor has considered the universality and humanism of all cultures. He claimed that all humans have culture; therefore, cultural divides, such as describing some societies as 'primitive,' should be avoided. Tylor's work emerged at the time when eugenics, racism and social Darwinism were prevalent in Western societies. Religious leaders claimed that individuals with disability face challenges because of their fate and God's anger.

After Tylor, the concept of culture was criticized by several people. Because he claimed that culture is universal, his criticism clarified the difference between Culture and culture. The upper case 'C' represented the broad and universal culture, and the smaller case 'c' referred to the elements of culture specific to societies and communities. The importance of culture can be determined through its application and relevance in personal lives and outlooks. Bronislaw Malinowski claimed that there is a relationship between culture and institutions that provide meaning to each other. People develop societies, and each society is distinct. Besides, ethnocentrism is harmful to society as it judges other societies according to one's perceptions. Cultural relativism is the practice of judging other cultures according to their standards.

The Concept of Disability in Cultural Anthropology

It is difficult to say what precisely Anthropology can convey about the investigation of incapacity. Or maybe, anthropology carries investigation into society and the association of diversity in the social order. In a similar manner, handicaps cannot be well explained through the lenses of anthropology; rather, it can be portrayed in societal settings and recognized as a feature of the social process. Anthropology and handicaps can be comprehended through family relationships and personalities, focal to the procedures of socialization and adapting to the life cycle. On this point, anthropological emphasis on the local and the specific can negate the universalist tendency that disables people's approach. In different cultures, the perception of disability varies with different sorts and interpretations of human behaviour. Disability can refer to any physical or mental impairment that influences individual lives [5]. People experience impairments in different ways and situations. Thus, the definitions of disabilities vary across societies and communities. Understanding the concept of disability in different cultures requires disentangling physical disabilities from social disabilities and analysing disabilities in specific contexts. Ingstad and Reynolds Whyte (1995) gave the example of twins who are considered 'abnormal' in some societies due to superstitious beliefs. The analysis of disability from different cultures and societies necessitates the focus on local perceptions regarding disabilities and the treatment of disabled individuals. Such an approach may help in understanding the interaction between social organizations and disability.

Disability As A Culture

The exploration of societies and cultures develops the understanding of historical and contemporary interpretation of impairments in social settings. Disability Studies provides the interdisciplinary approach to developing a sociological, cultural, historical and philosophical approach to studying disabilities. As an interdisciplinary field, it defines impairment as the social restrictions that prevent individuals from fully participating in society. The British disability studies provided the following core ideas:

- impartial investigation instead of assessment of disability.
- disability as a social relation
- focus on social and economic elements of disability.
- Disability as a relation to physical impairment.
- Disability as social exclusion

During the 1980s, people with disability started to share a sense of belonging to a culture. Members of different impairment groups began to share the experiences of physical and social difficulties. The introduction of disability as a culture in America through campaigns and advertisements played a crucial role in building awareness about disabilities. A disabled people's organization, 'Society for Disability Arts and Culture', represents artistic practices and creativity developed from impairment. Disability activists in the UK introduced disability cultures and characterized disability experiences in specific ways. Western understandings of impairment and disability are expressed in a universal view of being a 'person.' From this perspective, the medical and social models of disability are criticized. The medical model is an individualized approach towards disability as it represents disabled people as 'victims' of social situations. In the social model of disability, people with impairment are considered 'disabled' through limitations and restrictions to basic facilities and social recognition. Goodley (2017) described that members of the community should not consider disabled individuals as 'victims' or 'broken'; rather, society should play the key role in eliminating challenges to improve their participation in society.

Disabled individuals share the elements of social history and the practices through which they strive for recognition. They have a sense of belonging to a group and pride in their community. Communication plays a key role in developing disability as a culture. Deaf people were the earliest group to organize the practices that could establish shared views and facilitate group participation. Since the emergence of disability culture, organizations and campaigns played a crucial role in engaging disabled individuals through arts, music, and other activities. The research conducted by Sharon Barnartt (1996) regarding disability culture found that disability culture is a set of artefacts, behaviours, symbols and beliefs that shape communities. Evidence demonstrates that disability is embedded in culture through arts, music, language, social organizations and political cohesion.

Anthropological Perspectives of Disability

Cross-cultural approaches

- Systems, custom, conventions
- Family and friends
- Community
- Incompetence and skills
- Stigma and lack of knowledge

As of late, researchers have concentrated their attention on disability with the understanding that disability is a social and cultural construct. Cross-cultural studies of disability imply the focus on cultural understandings and diversities. The purpose of the cross-cultural approach is to challenge the universal ideas and claims regarding disabilities. The cross-cultural approach provides examples to contradict the universalist assumptions of Western scholarship. The purpose of this approach is also to address the negative role of cultural. perceptions of disability. Universalists consider the international relevance of their idea. Whereas, the cultural relativists accept that the practices and opinions of society influence perceptions and behaviours regarding disability.

Ethnographic Approaches

- Focus on cultural importance
- Focus on personal experience
- Focus on social relations
- Focus on international and political economy
- Focus on disabilities in different locations and communities.

Ethnographers can conduct participant observation and interviews to study the concept of disability in different cultures. Participant observation requires the ethnographer to work and live within the culture they study and record their observations in detailed field notes. Ethnographers participate in the everyday lives of their research participants as well as disclose their identities as researchers. The ethnographer participates in the lives of disabled individuals to understand their experience. The key consideration of ethnographic studies are that the role of an ethnographer varies in different contexts. The observation can be conducted for an extended time in which ethnographers collaborate with many people in different ways. The focus of the ethnographer should be on the subjective experiences of people, and he should avoid judging them according to his assumptions and perceptions. In disability studies, the ethnographic approach can help determine the personal experiences of disabled individuals and the challenges that they face in society.

Other approaches

- Historical Studies
- Media Studies
- Biography
- Analysis of Policy
- Analysis of Social Structures
- Data Collection

Historical studies can help explain how the concept of disability evolved over a long period in different social and economic contexts. The role of media can be determined to understand how disability is portrayed in contemporary societies. Media has a significant role in constructing the ideas of 'normality' and 'disability.' Policies regarding disabled people must be analysed to examine the rights and facilities available to people with impairments. Disability studies and cultural anthropology both aim to understand and challenge the social restrictions that impact disabled people.

Disability Research

Disability research is affected by differences in languages and cultures. Medical researchers are more likely to consider the technical and medical characteristics of disability, whereas social researchers can highlight the influence of society and culture. The consideration of different research methods, including qualitative and quantitative methods, helps explain disability from different perspectives. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations, reveal personal experiences and social meanings. Quantitative methods explain patterns, prevalence and population trends. Combining approaches can create a more comprehensive understanding of disability.

Contributions of Anthropology and Disability Studies

- Explain disabilities as social and cultural constructs.
- Challenge universal and ethnocentric assumptions
- Explore the interaction between bodily impairment and society.
- Identify social exclusion and discrimination
- Understand diverse experiences across cultures
- Promote the rights and inclusion of disabled people.

According to the social model, Inabilities are considered to face to face mind, and bodies by allegorical, we may discus social incapacities, for example, destitution or race. However, the central significance of handicap for a large portion of us is a bio-physiological one. Dazzle ness, weakness,

mental inadequacy, perpetual crippling sickness—these are a portion of the prototypical incapacities.

- Evolutionary model of handicap
- Disability accompanied industrialization
- Technology created to suit the ‘typical’ individual.
- Disability is linked to Western capitalism

Oliver’s approach

- Marxist or historical materialist approachEvolutionary model of disability.
- Disability came with industrialization
- Technology developed to suit the ‘normal’ person.
- Disability is linked to Western capitalism
- The Marxist or historical materialist approach
- Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS).

Disability is the active and purposive social exclusion and disadvantaging of people with impairment’ and ‘a social relational as opposed to a biologically determined phenomenon’ (cited in Thomas and Corker 2002: 18).

Ingstad & Reynolds Whyte

Maasai: Disability = lizard that walks awkwardly

Tamasheq: Impairments include freckles, small buttocks, protruding naval

Development of Disability Studies…

- UK
- Post-industrial revolution
- US
- American Civil Rights Movement
- Human rights focus

UK and US. While American grant has examined at incredible length the choices of U.S. courts, researchers have seldom looked over the Atlantic so as to pick up another point of view on the situation in American incapacity law. One part of the synchronization is the nearness of thin legal understandings of handicaps in both the EU and the U.S. Vlad Perju, in his book “Impedance, Separation, and the Legitimate Development of Handicap in the European Association and the US,” has said this contention of first recognizing a synchronized advancement of incapacity law in Europe/UK and the US additionally, just a solid social segregation approach could make the mutual

political awareness fundamental for change in both US and EU.

Post-industrial revolution We already had little data about it yet, amid the nineteenth Century, around a hundred non-lethal mishaps occurred in England's mines, each deadly one driving, as a rule, to lasting incapacities. Be that as it may, the team working on this undertaking as of late demonstrated that crippled individuals assumed a similarly vital part to that of whatever remains of the specialists amid this period, regardless of whether it wasn't really on similar terms.

- American social liberties development. The Edges of Citizenship gives a far-reaching, sociological history of the battle for social equality for individuals with scholarly handicaps. Allison Carey, who has been dynamic in incapacity promotion and governmental issues for as long as she can remember, draws upon an expansive scope of verifiable and authoritative reports, and additionally, the writing of citizenship concentrates on building up a "social practice" way to deal with the issues of scholarly inability and social liberties. She analyzes how and why guardians, self-backers, and experts have battled for various dreams of rights for this populace all through the twentieth century and how things have changed over that time.
- Two main purposes:
    - Provision of cross-cultural examples to counter universalist assumptions of Western scholarship.
    - Examples to highlight the negative impact of 'culture' on the biomedical management of impairment.
- Are historical texts as important as contemporary experience.?

Historical writings are legitimate yet not as essential as contemporary experience because of the way that subjective linkage of impacts of incapacity must be attracted significant way, which is just conceivable through subjective research or ethnographic methods for examining whereby a scientist would uncover all the dark areas by watching contemporary realities in view of subjective approach.

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