Evaluation of Mentally Disabled Individuals' Participation to Social Life[*][+]

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Abstract

Disability, services provided to disabled people, education and employment of disabled people are some of the mostly discussed issues among developing societies. Especially, it is discussed that mentally disabled individuals among disabled groups encounter with more problems and they have to lead isolated lives from society. However, interaction with another living creature and socialization are among the basic needs of a living creature. The aim of the study is to evaluate the comments of academics and members of profession who work on disability about mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life. To this end, 18 people who work on disability were interviewed. In the study, qualitative research design is preferred. According to that, it is identified that 9 out of 18 participants (P1, P2, P9, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18) state that mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life is "insufficient." 11 of the participants (P1, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14) indicate "social stigmatizations" as the factor that hinders mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life. It is revealed that in order to get rid of the factors that hinder mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life, 12 of the participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P11, P14, P15, P17) emphasize the necessity of raising "social awareness."

Keywords:

First keyword; Disability
Second keyword; Social Life
Third keyword; Mental Disability
Fourth keyword; Social Awareness
Fifth keyword; Stigmatization

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1. Introduction

In the literature, "handicap" and "disability" are defined differently. According to the definition of World Health Organization, handicap is defined as any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal [31]. In the law no. 2828 of Social Services and Child Protection Institution, handicapped person is "the one who lacks physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and social talents in a certain extent innately or as a consequence of an illness and an accident thus could not keep pace with the requirements of normal life; and in need of care, rehabilitation, consultancy and support." In

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another definition, handicap is defined as individual's lack or abnormality in physiological, psychological and anatomic functions [40].

According to the World Health Organization, disability is defined as the condition of not being able to fulfill the expected roles from that individual based on the age, sex, "*social and cultural factors*"due to impairment or a disability [31]. In other words, being disabled is seen as interpretation, restatement with various practices and reproducing of individual's biologic/organic disability by his/her family, social environment, institutions and structures [23]. In Turkey, in the law no.5378 concerning disabled people, disabled is defined as "an individual who is affected by attitudes and environmental aspects that hinder his/her participation to society fully and equally like other individuals due to his/her lack of physical, mental, spiritual and sensual faculties." In the same law, with the amendment done in 2013, it is stated that expression of "handicapped" changed with "disabled."

Actually, characterizing "handicapped" individuals as "disabled" is because the existing environmental conditions pose obstacles to them. As Kaya (2010) states disability is not originated from childhood but environmental conditions create disability [32]. In one sense, "disabled" ones are the victims of their environments.

1.1. Mental Disability

When defining mental disability in the literature, such concepts like "mental disability, mental incompetence and mental deficiency" are used. Variety of concepts and differences among them might derive since the subject is dealt by several disciplines. Çiftçi-Tekinarslan (2008) states that in the early years the definition were done by medicine doctors and in time it gave place to the definitions done by psychologists and educators [13]. In the most general sense, mental disability is defined as lack of mental competence in a certain extent [11]. Atala (2009) defines mental disability as "a perpetual situation of continuous ageing, stagnation and decline in mental developments and functions due to certain reasons that may occur before, during and after the birth and as a result of this deficiency and insufficiency on adaptation behaviors." [4].

1.2. Problems That Mentally Disabled Individuals Encounter

Although disabled individuals' ability to benefit from education, health, employment facilities like other segments of society has started to be seen as their rights in 21st century, it is stated that disabled people experience serious problems in terms of their status in the society and their rights to use those facilities [26]. In our age, services provided to disadvantages sections can be seen as an indicator of development [21].

It can be said that among disabled people, especially mentally disabled people experience more problems in terms of identifying and developing solutions to their problems [57], [58]. For mentally disabled people participation to social life is seen as an important issue.

1.3. Participating in Social Life

Demirbilek (2013) states that the power of social interaction that is indispensible part of human life develops depending on individual's social competence and individuals who cannot reach the sufficient level of social skills experience problems in human interaction, labor relations, and emotional and behavioral areas [16]. It is emphasized that social interaction is also important in terms of gaining self-respect and it is one of the fundamental sources of self-respect in individual's daily human experiences [31]. In addition to that, social interaction has to be enhanced in order to ease the process of making independent decisions and making new friends thanks to self-reliance; and also in order for individual not to feel ashamed of him/herself [34]. Karataş and Duyan (2007) point out that this enhancement is possible through social support and social support means that individuals have an access to someone when they are in need of help [31].

It is known that individuals marginalized and not supported by society remain incapable of developing their life related skills. According to Aykara (2011), the main reason why disabled people experience some adaptation problems is lack of social support in social life [6].

It is emphasized that disabled individual is seen as the source of conflict with his/her family and society; and this derives from society's discriminative, exclusionist, insulting and disrespectful attitudes toward diversities [28].

According to Weinberg (1983), non-disabled people in society constantly violate disabled people's social rights by staring at them, asking tough questions and helping them without they ask for help and by humiliating and insulting them [34]. As a supporter to that, it can be concluded that, by examining the disabled people's relations with outer world, outer world has an impact of disabled individuals and they feel pity and make fun of disabled people [61]. It is underlined that society's attitude, even a small child's, is curious, pitiful, malcontent and even frightened [46]. It is also stated that since disabled people are in disadvantageous condition in the society and they are not that knowledgeable in terms of integration with society and their rights to benefit from certain rights and services, this disadvantageous condition is getting

consolidated [43]. Also, it is pointed out that most of the time, notion of disability is interpreted as disabled people's lack of talent and capacity thus they remain outside the economic life and get marginalized, worthless and poorer [23]. It is emphasized that especially continual mental disability may result in life long unemployment [9], [62].

Given the laws directly affect disabled people's life and these laws generally interpret disability as a physical condition that hinders vital activities; it is pointed out that the laws are controversial since this definition is also related with other new notions such as limitation of the talents, important vital activities and physical condition [38]. As it was the case for all discrimination, in order to solve the problems of mentally disabled people what matters first for society, state and individuals is to "recognition" of disabled people's identity before sharing the social and material sources [17]. Based on this, it can be said that the notions of disability or disability that are seen as problems are actually rooted in society. Özgür (2013) posits that since none of the disabled people choose the conditions they live in voluntarily but they become disabled due to society's uninformed, insufficient, disregardful attitudes; and since the cause of the problem is society, solution of the problem has to be searched in society as well [45].

It was emphasized that society has to give up its biases and see disabled and non-disabled people equal and support the ones who cannot join production process not condescendingly but as a sign of solidarity and include them into production process [42]. In this point, İkizoğlu (2001) points out the importance of societal protection principle that aims to enable disabled or special people live in their natural environment and argues that societal protection principle can create the least restricting environment especially for mentally disabled people [27].

Among other disability groups, mentally disabled people are the ones who are excluded most from society [16], and in addition to that those people have to scramble to live with their disabilities as well as to fit into society [6].

Importance of creating suitable conditions especially for mentally disabled people to acquire necessary skills and use those skills to socialize so that they can act independently is emphasized [24]. It is stated that despite different reasons and types of mental disability, all mentally disabled people have certain needs like others in society [16]. The main and primarily goal is stated as to enable mentally disabled people to integrate with society so that they can use their skills that can be gained as basic self-care and social and occupational skills [24]. It is underlined that in order to enable this sort of disabled people and their families to participate in social life actively, in addition to existing medical treatment; education, rehabilitation and care services have to be developed [16].

2. Method

2.1. Aim of the Study

General aim of the study is explained as follows:

"Evaluation of the comments of academics and members of profession who work on disability about mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life."

In line of general aim expressed above the sub goals of the study as follows:

1.   How is the participation of mentally disabled people to social life?

2.   What are the factors that hinder participation of mentally disabled people to social life?

3.   What are the suggestions that can remove the factors hindering participation of mentally disabled people to social life?

2.2. Type of the study

In the study, qualitative research design is preferred. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) defines qualitative research as "*study in which qualitative data collection tools such as observation, interview and document analysis are used and perceptions and events are revealed realistically and holistically in their natural environment*" and similarly İslamoğlu (2009) defines qualitative research as *"acquiring information about social phenomena in their depended and natural environment through observation, interview and evaluating documents and by analyzing the information to theorize hypothesis."* [29]. In a study, participants use the analogy of *"looking to a picture closely and from far away"* also they define qualitative study as *"an attempt to reveal personal perceptions and perspectives"* [48]. As a result, qualitative study is one of the methods designed to produce knowledge in order to crack the secrets of humans themselves and to discover the depth of social systems [44].

The most important reason why qualitative method is chosen for the study is, undoubtedly, related with qualitative research's main characteristic of being able to reveal point of views and semantic worlds of study subjects as the definitions suggest [35]; and qualitative research's ability of adopting interdisciplinary and holistic approach to examine the study objective interpretatively. In this way, studied phenomena and events can be tackled in their own context and interpreted in terms of the meanings that were ascribed by

people [3], [52]. It is stated that tackling with the study subject in its own context would make it understood better [50], [63].

Another reason of why qualitative research design is chosen is related with the fact that traditional test of hypothesis approach is not that suitable for social research objectives derive from vocational practice and organizational and institutional environments [47]. When comparing social phenomena, not generalizations but content specific interpretations and their comparison with other situations is important [63]. Based on this, rather than turning social life and variables into numbers, qualitative researchers try to borrow ideas from people and contextualize them and; in addition to that they examine motives, themes, differences and ideas instead of variables [41]. In other words, *"having interaction with people remained at the forefront"* of the study [56]. Because in qualitative research there is a population not based on people but based on *"experience, interactions and their social connections, suggestions, behavior, events"* [22], [37], [63]. In qualitative study, researcher attempts to offer in-depth description [63]. In relation to that, researcher is not data collector of one-sided interaction process [37].

2.3. Limitations

Since the study is designed with qualitative research design, it aims to collect data from a numerically small group. The limitation of the study is that given the research group consists of experts on disability; the data cannot be generalized to the population.

2.4. Participants

Study was conducted with 18 participants who are academics and members of profession work on disability and accepted to join the study. Their comments on mentally disabled people's participation to social life were evaluated. Participants' opinions are in the table below:

Table 1. Introductory information about participants

	Age	Sex	Education	Profession	Relation with disability
Participant 1	35	Female	Master	Academic	Dissertation
Participant 2	42	Male	PhD	Academic	Dissertation, Consultancy
Participant 3	50	Male	PhD	Academic	Consultancy, Coordinatorships, Has a disabled child
Participant 4	29	Female	Master	Academic	Dissertation, Research
Participant 5	57	Male	PhD	Academic	Bureaucracy
Participant 6	25	Male	Bachelor	In charge of social projects	Project
Participant 7	57	Female	Bachelor	Teacher	Moderatorship Consultancy, Project
Participant 8	35	Female	PhD	Academic	Dissertation, Project
Participant 9	28	Female	Master	Academic	Project, Research
Participant 10	27	Male	Bachelor	Expert on special education	Job
Participant 11	38	Male	Master	Academic	Dissertation, Research
Participant 12	32	Male	Bachelor	Education coordinator	Congress, Research, Project
Participant 13	50	Male	PhD	Academic	Dissertation, Consultancy, Project
Participant 14	39	Male	PhD	Teacher	Project
Participant 15	30	Male	Bachelor	In charge of technology unit for visually disabled people	Project, NGO
Participant 16	50	Male	Bachelor	Social Worker	Project
Participant 17	43	Female	PhD	Academic	Expert on programme development
Participant 18	38	Male	Master	In charge of accessible university unit	Dissertation, himself is a disabled

In the Tablo 1, there is information about participants. When the table is examined, it is seen that age range of the participants is between 27 and 57; and 6 of them female, 12 of them male; and 7 obtain PhD, 5 obtain master's degree, 6 obtain bachelor's degree. Regarding their professions; 10 of them are academics, 1 is in charge of social projects in a local administration, 1 is expert on special education in a private

institution, 1 is education coordinator in a private institution, 2 of them are teachers, 1 is social worker, 1 is in charge of technology unit for visually disabled people, 1 is in charge of accessible university unit. P1 has a dissertation on disability; P2 has its own dissertation on disability and supervises students' disability related dissertations; P3 supervises dissertations on disability, coordinate student unions related with disability and has a disabled child; P4 has her dissertation and researches on disability; P5 is at the moment an academic but he was on bureaucratic duties in institutions and organizations related with disability for a long time; P6 is in charge of a toy making project of a local administration that aims to employ disabled people; K7 is moderator of Accessible Universities Platform, disabled students counsel in a university and produces projects for disabled students; P8 supervises dissertations and participate in projects that make disabled people's physical life easier especially architecturally; P9 participates in trainings, projects and researches related with disability; P10 does one-to-one implementations with mentally disabled people since it is his job; P11 has dissertation and some projects on disability; P12 participates in congress and researches and especially joins projects related to disabled people's employment; P13 has his own dissertation and supervises dissertations on disability also has a project on employment of disabled people that is accepted by European Union; P14 participates in projects on disabled people's education organized by Ministry of Education; P15 participates in several projects especially the ones that aim to enable visually disabled people to use mobile and computer technologies and is a province representative of Turkey Accessible Informatics Platform and also is a member of a NGO related with accessibility; P16 works in institutions and organizations that perform application on disability for more than 20 years and participates in the project that is the first café project in Turkey for disabled people's employment; P17 prepares special individual programmes for education of special children; and P18 has his dissertation on disability and he himself is visually disabled.

2.5. Analysis of Data

Data set is gained through the responses taken during the interviews. This data set is divided into main themes based on the questions asked to the participants and in a general framework codes are prepared. Under the main themes, some related answers are combined together and sub-themes are created.

3. Results and Discussion

Tablo 2 .Information regarding participants' comments on mentally disabled people's participation to social life

	n	Participants
There is no participation to social life	1	P3
Insufficient	9	P1, P2, P9, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18
Limited	2	P4, P5
Low	2	P6, P10
Not good	1	P7
Depends on the conditions	2	P6, P8
Better	2	P11, P16

In the Tablo 2, there is information regarding comments of participants on mentally disabled people's participation to social life. When the table is examined, it is revealed in regard to disabled people's participation to social life that: 1 of the participants says no participation; 9 of them say insufficient participation; 2 of them say limited participation; 2 of them say low participation; 1 of them says not good participation; 2 of them say participation depends on the conditions and 2 of them say better participation. Participants who use similar statements offer different reasoning. To illustrate P1 and P12 who think that mentally disabled people's participation to social life is insufficient and emphasize the fact of disabled people's being distanced from work life as the reason of their insufficient participation to social life. In relation to this, P1 uses the expression that: *"Disabled people cannot participate in social life as it has to be. The most fundamental indicator of this situation is right to work, which is also a human right. Disabled people's unemployment is higher compared to general unemployment rate."* As a part of the project of Creating a Determination, Information and Data Base for Integrating Disabled People into Society (ÖZVERİ), in a study to determine disabled people and their families' demographic, economic, and psycho-social conditions in Malatya, it is revealed that only very small portion of disabled people (2,5%) of them work; majority (97,5%) do not work [43]. However, according to Şahin (2004) employment has both economic and social dimensions [53]. It is stated that employment of disabled people enables them to earn money, benefits from social security facilities and along with those, provides a basis for having better psychological and social conditions [40]. In that regard, in the literature it is emphasized that enough importance is not given to employment of in specific mentally disabled people and in general all disabled groups and there are problems in disabled people's employment thus disabled-friendly employment policies

are required [2], [12], [14], [19], [25], [33], [36], [39], [49], [65], [59], [60]. P2 states that education given to mentally disabled people in educational establishments is not enough for them to adapt themselves to social life and he indicates that trainer/teachers also need disability related information and training. In other words, education itself might be a limitation to social life. Based on the study done with 182 preschool teachers that join a seminar organized for them in İstanbul and Ankara, teachers are asked to define "a child who requires a special education" and 62.1% of teachers cannot make the definition; 17.6% of them define children who need special education as mentally disabled students [54]. Among the participants P15 and P18 touch upon the issue of education: P15 points out that mentally disabled individuals are not guided correctly; and P18 points out the lack of good model and institution for mentally disabled people's education. Baykara-Pehlivan and Baykara-Acar (2009) state that only a very small portion of children with special needs can take benefit from schooling system and get suitable education for them [8]. As a supportive point to that, Akçamete (1991) underlines that although certain philosophies of education are embraced, they lack theoretical foundation and since they give importance to cognitive development, children's talents are developed in a hierarchical order that does not take features of children's ages into consideration [1]. P9 by saying:*"I do believe that there is no enough statistics on mentally disabled people, their disability conditions and needs in our country. Still lots of families have a tendency to hide that they have mentally disabled children. I think mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life is insufficient"* emphasizes the lack of statistical studies in our country. P13 by saying *"right now, there are several services for mentally disabled people themselves. However, participation is not enough now. The State provides several services but participations are not that high. To a great extent, they continue to live with their families,"* underlines the fact that despite state's services, most of mentally disabled people live with their families. P14 also emphasizes the low level of social acceptance and unwillingness of family.

Table 3. Information regarding participants' comments on the reasons that hinder mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life

Reasons that hinders participating in social life	n	Participants
Lack of ducation	7	P1, P2, P5, P6, P11, P15, P18
Social stigmatization	11	P1, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14
State policies	6	P5, P6, P11, P12, P13, P16
Physiological barriers	4	P2, P4, P6, P8
Powerty	2	P1, P8
Family	3	P12, P15, P17
Quality of educator	3	P12, P16, P18
Charity and mediatic approach	1	P5
Difficulty in learning	1	P3

In the tablo 3, there is information regarding participants' comments on the reasons that hinder mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life. When the table is examined, reasons that hinder mentally disabled people's participation to social life according to participants as follow: 7 of the participants say lack of education; 11 of them say social stigmatization; 6 of them say state policy; 4 of them say physiological barriers; 2 of them say poverty; 3 of them say family; 3 of them say quality of educator; 1 one them says charity and mediatic approach and one says difficulty in learning. In relation to "lack of education" title, P11 by saying: *"Since this is my area of field, lots of ideas come to my mind. Foremost among these is to educating the environment, not only legal aspect though, environment education is too limited and restricted and since the families with mentally disabled children do not have enough information about those issues they can be easily manipulated by others and they have such a tendency to do what others suggest them to do,"* underlines based on his experiences, lack of education of families, environment as well as society they live in. With this statement, it is also emphasized that without sufficient amount of knowledge disabled people and their families might be misguided and even this situation may turn into exploitation. Under the title of "Social stigmatization," participants state how the view of society towards disabled people hinders their participation to social life and alienates them from society. In relation to this while P9 says: *"In my opinion, the most important reason that hinders mentally disabled people's participation to social life is attitudes. Attitudes exhibited to mentally disabled people like fear, hesitation, not looking at him/her and ignoring/overlooking them make their participation to social life difficult."* P14 says: *"I think, when an idealist mother goes outside with her child so as to enable her child to benefit from educational environments and social life, other students in classrooms, other people in society and even relatives react to mother's attempt and they don't come to places she goes. That leads to certain behaviors such as isolating these children from this life, not going out with them and hide them."* Statements of both participants point out that the reason of not participating in social life is "social stigmatization." As a supporting point to this argument, Yılmaz (2004) in her study done with 341 disabled workers indicates that these workers suffer from

discrimination and embodies the types of discrimination into 12 subheadings [65]. The most important of those are "pity" and "ostracisation." Çopuroğlu and Mengi (2014) based on their study with 42 participants who have autistic children and mostly take charge in autism related associations and foundations, point out that since these children show their behaviors differently compared to the ones who make normal development, they are stigmatized in social environments [15]. Under the title of "State policy" participants point out that education given to mentally disabled people is not supportive to their social life, there is lack of statistical data, employment is not provided for mentally disabled people, and in relation to that their possible contribution to workforce could not be measured yet, instead of lasting and permanent state policy, there has been unstable state policies. In that regard P6 expresses that *"With development of industrial society, general policy became to support single type of "healthy" people; and exclude disadvantaged individuals consist of sick, aged and disabled people and individuals that cannot join active workforce. Those people are locked in and forced to live places far from the cities. With the rise of the notion of human rights, states have started to be more careful in this area yet there have not been enough regulations. The reason why those disabled people cannot participate in social life is to a greater extent related with state policy."* He emphasizes that, by mentioning the factors that shaped state policies, states keep disabled people out of social spaces because of political reasons. P18 also criticizes state policy in this subject matter and underlines that disabled people are kept away from society as a result of political necessities and; expresses that physical conditions that arise from state policies also hinder participation to social life and says that *"We want accessible architecture, accessible lives in the society but not inside the city and away from chaos."* In the literature, it is emphasized that regardless of the type of disabilities, physical environment is one of the biggest obstacles that prevents disabled individual to participate in social life [10], [20], [30], [64]. However, there are studies indicating examples that do not follow the recommendations. Düger and Kayıhan (2001) based on their study with 17 culture and art center that are investigated among 157 buildings of 10 different districts of Ankara, 88.23 % of 17 culture and art centers have stairs, but on the other hand 29.41% have ramps and; none of them has an elevator [18].

Table 4. Information regarding participants' comments on how to remove hindering factors on mentally disabled individuals' participation to social life

Suggestions to Remove the Factors Hindering Participation to Social Life	n	Participants
Legal arrangement	3	P1, P4, P10
Social Awareness	12	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P11, P14, P15, P17
Efficient education	8	P1, P4, P5, P10, P12, P13, P14, P18
Social Policy	3	P8, P12, P16
Family	2	P17, P18
NGO (Non-Governmental Organization)	1	P5

In the Tablo 4, there is information regarding participants' comments on how to remove hindering factors on mentally disabled people's participation to social life. When the table is examined, participants' responses on how to remove hindering factors as follow: 3 of the participants suggest legal arrangements, 12 of them suggest social awareness, 8 of them suggest efficient education, 3 of them suggest social policy, 2 of them suggest family and 1 of them suggests NGO. In relation to "social awareness" title, P6 says: *"Creating a social awareness of living together in society will also develop valuing every individual in society. In a society or a gathering with this awareness, people would not be evaluated based on their features. When people become more sensible to individuals' features and sensibilities, they would think more about accessibility. Families and social groups would be more sensitive. Transformation of society also would bring about transformation of state policies."* By saying this, he emphasizes that social awareness and awareness to live together will bring about accessibility and social policy production. In that regard, regulations themselves are disabled and the legal regulations that determine services to disabled people are messy and disorganized. Relevant to the topic, first of all it is necessary to recognize social exclusion when policies regarding disabled people are prepared and services are provided; and right-based approach has to be adopted [26] and it could only be possible with developing an awareness to live together. In addition to that, P11 states *"People on the streets can inform through brochures and posters. However none of those happens. Counseling and research center does not to do any statistical research to figure out how many handicapped or disabled people are there in a given area. Ministry of family and social policy establishes rehabilitation centers outside the cities. Most of people think that it is better to build up those centers far from society and people but it seems impossible to socialize unless we make them join people and society."*

By saying that, he points out the importance of having regional statistical studies and establishing centers not far from social life areas. In addition to these, P4 argues that awareness can be raised from the very early ages thus education is a must by saying that: *"In order to raise awareness and positive attitude toward disabled people in society, starting from preschool positive and integrating information about disabled people have to be given through lessons and activities."* According to Tuncer et al.'s study (2011) where they investigated Turkish books through document analysis in term of how and how much the issue of disability is covered, it is seen that the books include next to nothing; when books of all class levels are considered, the percentage of text is 1.7, percentage of photos is 0.9, and percentage of pictures is 0.0 [55]. These findings indicate that disability in general and mental disability in specific is not part of an education in early ages to raise awareness in society. There are studies who show that informing non-disabled students about disabled ones or teach them how to help their disabled peers have positive impacts on their acceptance levels [5], [7], [51]. Under the title of "efficient education" participants point out the necessity of having certain practices in mentally disabled individuals' education so as to ease their participation to social life. In that regard, P12 indicates lack of established education system for mentally disabled people in our country and also he compares with the applications in foreign countries and argues that education has to start intensively in early ages; and says:*"I was not able to follow the regulations related special education. The state's policy of "educate every child for a while but educate them [mentally disabled ones] lifelong" is problematic. The mentality is if a child was born with down syndrome, let educate him/her forever. However, in foreign countries, those children are educated intensively in their early ages so that they would lead their lives independently in the future."*

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, results are as follows:

- 9 out of 18 participants who were interviewed as a part of the study evaluate that mentally disabled people's participation to social life is "insufficient."
- 11 of the participants indicate "social stigmatization" as the reason that hinders mentally disabled people's participation to social life.
- 12 of the participants underline the necessity of raising social awareness in order to remove the factors that hinder mentally disabled people's participation to social life.

Based on the results obtained from the study;

In this study, it is underlined that disabled people's participation to social life is insufficient. Demographic indicators of societies reveal the fact that status of disabled people in total population and their problems are significantly important. Enhancing the existing disabled people's right to live, right to be protected and right to participate is as important as to examine the reasons of disability. Enabling disabled people to participate in social life as active and productive people is an aspect of modern social policy line. To this end, in every mentioned topic, integrative method has to be adopted.

- In order to get rid of social stigmatization that is one of the factors hinders mentally disabled people's participation to social life, social awareness has to be raised. In this way, it is simple fact that the obstacles for the disabled person who can be seen "different" by the society can be eliminated. It would be wise to put into force existing regulations by means of eliminating negative perception in order to be able to observe disabled people about what they can do in social life
- It is suggested to have informative missions to erode social stigmatization and raise awareness. In that sense, trainer-trainings, family trainings; and cooperation between local administrative practices and public utilities will be beneficial.

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