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The study of socio-demographic situation and employment opportunities of disabled persons in Azerbaijan

Вивчення соціально-демографічного становища інвалідів в Азербайджані і можливостей їх зайнятості

Activities related to the social and vocational rehabilitation, employment of disabled persons and their integration to the society takes an important part among the social activities carried out in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Main purpose of this activity is making more efficient use of potential opportunities of disabled persons in order these people felt themselves as the full fledged, active and helpful members of society.

In the article, there were investigated the issues such as socio-demographic situations, level of education of disabled persons, the reason of their disability, its degree and durability, their current labour activity, employment opportunities, level of social service shown to them on the basis of the results of the sociological survey conducted among people with disabilities in Lankaran economic region, and recommendations were provided for employing people with disabilities.

Keywords: people with disabilities, cause of disability, duration of disability, social service, employment opportunities, labour activity, working experience.

Серед соціальних заходів, здійснюваних в Азербайджанській Республіці, важливе місце займає діяльність по соціально-професійній реабілітації інвалідів, їх зайнятості та інтеграції в суспільство. Основна мета цієї діяльності полягає в більш ефективному використанні потенційних можливостей інвалідів, відчутті себе повноправними, активними і потрібними членами суспільства.

У статті на основі результатів соціологічного опитування, проведеного серед інвалідів, які проживають в Ленкоранському економічному районі, досліджені такі питання, як їх соціально-демографічне становище, рівень освіти, причини, ступінь і період інвалідності, нинішня трудова діяльність, можливості зайнятості, рівень наданих їм соціальних послуг та шляхи їх інтеграції у суспільство. У висновку розроблені рекомендації по залученню інвалідів до трудової діяльності.

Ключові слова: люди з інвалідністю, причини інвалідності, період інвалідності, соціальне обслуговування, можливості зайнятості, трудова діяльність, стаж роботи.

Introduction. Disability reflects a social phenomenon in itself that no society cannot escape and every country forms its social and economic policies against persons with disabilities in accordance with the level of its development, priority and opportunities. Along with the other socio-economic problems arising from the transition to market relations in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the organization of social protection of socially vulnerable people, including people with disabilities in accordance with the international standards has become one of the most important issues. The policy of attitude towards the persons with disability consisting of social service and indigence measures which formed in the society over the years has changed significantly, there have been taken important steps directed to their economic independence and full integration to the society.

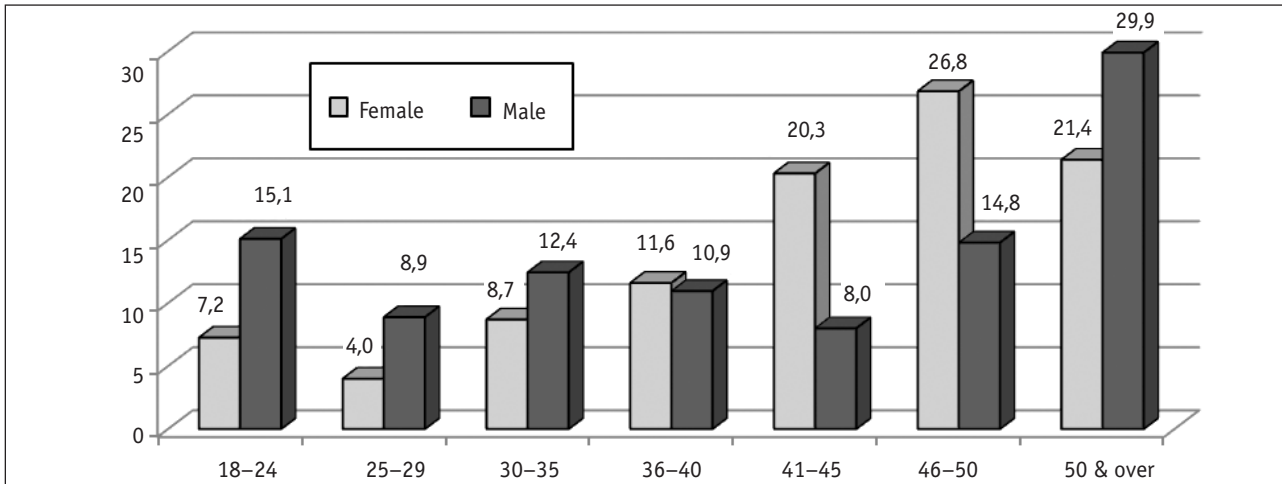
Azerbaijan Republic has become a party to a number of international contracts, as well as ILO and UN Conventions and Recommendations related to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. It is indicated in "Standard Rules of the provision of equal opportunities for people with disabilities" certified by the UN General Assembly in 1993 acceded by Azerbaijan that, the states should adopt the principle of the creation of opportunities for the implementation of existing rights. In order to be engaged inefficient and income-generating labour activities in the labour market both in urban and rural areas, the persons with disabilities should have equal opportunities with other people [2]. It is stated in the article of Convention "On the rights of disabled persons" named "Labour and employment" adopted on December 13, 2006 by the General Assembly of the United Nations and acceded by Azerbaijan Republic on October 2, 2008: "Participating states, along with other persons, recognize the labour right of people with disabilities; this right includes the right to self-sufficiency of disabled persons with the labour chosen and agreed by the disabled person in order to be engaged in clear, inclusive and efficient conditions" [3, art. 27].

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Picture 1. Age-sex structure of the persons with disabilities (in per cent)



Legislative system of the Azerbaijan Republic is in accordance with these principles, and opens great opportunities for the improvement of social protection, employment and potential possibilities of the persons with the disability. The right for independent choice of activity type, profession, occupation and workplace by every person, as well as by the persons with disability on the basis of their abilities are identified in the Constitution of Azerbaijan Republic [1, art. 35].

Point at issue. Although the persons with disability cannot participate in labour activities as the normal people because of their limited physical capabilities, they are more or less involved to work. Employment of disabled persons has important socio-psychological and spiritual significance in their integration to the society by providing opportunities for the removal of barriers, improvement of financial situation of their families and themselves. Activities related to the social and vocational rehabilitation, employment of disabled persons and their integration to the society takes an important part among the social activities carried out in our Republic. Main purpose of this activity is making more efficient use of potential opportunities of disabled persons in order these people felt themselves as the full fledged, active and helpful members of society.

In this case, socio-demographic status of the person with disabilities, their level of education, profession and specialty, potential opportunities, interest, social status and so on. should be taken into account. Inability of acquisition of this information by the official statistics makes the conduction of social investigation important in this field. For this reason, sociological survey was conducted among the disabled persons more than 600 living in the southern part of the Republic. Selection of this area as an object of investigation is not casual. Thus, besides the level of disability in this region is higher than the relative indication of Republic, socio-demographic status and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities also have unique features.

Questions of the questionnaire are grouped on several blocks. Information on socio-demographic situation (age, sex, family composition, education, specialization), disability (reason, duration, group of disability, difficulties in the process of approval of disability, medical and social and other types of aids), employment (current activity and potential

opportunities) respectively about those involved in the survey, social and vocational rehabilitation of these people, their integration to the society are reflected in these blocks.

Analysis. Age structure of persons with disabilities who participated in the survey are mostly organized by older age groups. Thus, the largest share of persons with disabilities has been noted as 46-50 and more than 50 (respectively 26,1% and 20,2%), and the least share has been noted as 25-29 age group (6,7%). Such a situation is almost satisfactory in terms of health of the people. The fact that there is relatively less number of persons with disabilities among the younger generation indicates that the country has wide range of opportunities for generating healthy and highly bodied generation.

In its turn, in the age-sex structure of the persons with disabilities men are dominating and the highest indicator among them are those who are over 50 (29,9%), 18-24 (15%) and 46-50 (14,8%). In general, the gender equality is not followed. Thus, unlike the men, almost 70 % of women are basically 41-45, 46-50 and over 50 and their distribution on these groups have the same proportion in a certain sense (picture 1).

The concentration of disabled women in higher age group is connected to the heavy family and labour burden. The reason for this should be found in the history, mentality and customs of our people. The women with the age group mentioned above have limited opportunities to use leisure time sufficiently in terms of their health. Because most of them were busy in doing their jobs, house and family-child problems, and did not pay attention to their own physical and mental health.

On the distribution of people involved in the survey on disability group is dominated by second and third group of disability (respectively 84,2% and 13%). This type of distribution is connected with the reasons of disability. Thus, the first place among the reasons of disabilities belongs to the disability arisen as the result of general illness (96,1%). Development of healthcare in the country can be mentioned as the most important factor here. Thus, the health of people with disabilities is improving thanks to the modern medical assistance and unlike the 1st group of disabled people they do not need the service of others. The other group related to the illness – disabled from the childhood is 1,5%.

In its turn, composition of persons being disabled because of general reasons are mostly generated by the disabled having disability because of illness (94,6%) and the least special share is generated by the disabled having disability because of injury (0,8%).

The analysis due to the duration of disability indicates that, majority of the persons with disability are those who are disabled for 6–10 years (46,7%) and 1–5 years (38,6%). And the shares of disabled persons being disabled for 1 year and more than 10 years are almost the same (respectively, 7% and 7,7%).

The reason for this, as noted above, is associated with the development of healthcare in the country. Because, medical rehabilitation of people with disabilities makes their recovery possible a result of the high level of medical care in modern life.

It is known that, having 2 or more disabled persons in a family worsens the situation of these families. In the investigated regions, this types of families are 10,7%, families with 2 disabled are 9,2%, and the families having 2–3 disabled are 1,5%.

Taking into account that, the majority of people with disabilities involved in the survey are in the age group over 46, then their working experience is highly interesting. The analysis indicates that, only 43,2% of disabled persons have working experience. Among them, disabled having 11–20 years of working experience have the greatest specific weight (20%), and disabled having working experience more than 30 years have the least specific weight (1,8%) (table).

Distribution of persons with disabilities according to working experience

Work experience	Number (person)	Per cent
1 – 10 year	97	15,8
11 – 20 year	122	19,9
21 – 30 year	35	5,7
31 – 40 year	11	1,8
Having working experience, total	265	43,2
Has no working experience	349	56,8
Total	614	100,0

The level of education of disabled people plays an important role in their integration to the society. According to the level of education, intermediate (complete and incomplete) and secondary educated people (respectively, 58,5% and 21,0%) have the greatest specific weight. Those, completing technical and vocational schools are relatively few – 11,8%, and those completing higher (bachelor's and master's) education are 8,5%. And the least specific weight belongs to those who have primary education (0,2%).

The analysis of correlation between working experience and level of education indicates that, majority of people having 1–10 years of working experience (70,1%) are those having no specialty and qualification and having secondary and vocational education. 17,5% of this group are highly (bachelor's and master's degree) educated, 12,3% are those having vocational and technical education.

The same tendency is almost observed on the people with 11–20 years of working experience, namely the majori-

ty (61,2%) have secondary (complete and incomplete) and compulsory (17,4%) educated. People with higher (master's and bachelor's) education and technical education are few – each 10,7%. The share of secondary educated people among those having great working experience is relatively few. Here, those competing bachelor's degree of higher school and technical school takes the first place according to its specific weight. This type of distribution surrounds people with working experience more than 30 years (picture 2).

While conducting the survey, special attention was paid to the issue of learning employment level of the persons with disabilities. Information related to the employment have been analysed in a number of aspects – current labour activity of the persons with disability, gender structure of employment, ways of looking for a job and so on.

Generally, the majority of the persons with disability are unemployed (86,2%). The share of employed people are 10,9%, and the share of people having official work is 10,7%. And those being educated is only 0,2%. This type of distribution of disabled persons on their employment is almost consistent to the level of their labour opportunities. Thus, 84,2% of them are 2nd group of persons with disability.

The analysis of gender structure of employment of the persons with disability indicates that, the share of employed people among the women exceeds the corresponding figure for men (respectively, 11,7% and 10,6%). At the same time, unemployment is dominated by men. This type of distribution is not unexpected, because gender distribution on the employment level of people with disabilities fully corresponds to the special weights in their total number. Thus, the share of unemployed women are 88,3%, and the men are – 88,8% (picture 3).

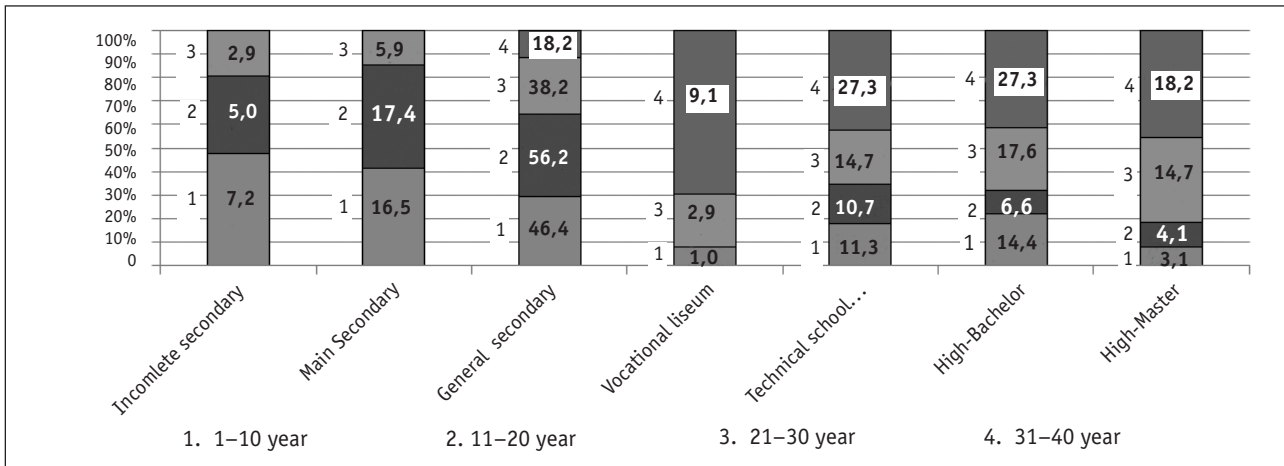
Investigation of the relationship between employment status and working experience of persons with disabilities indicates that, the main place in time structure of employment is taken by those having working experience up to 10 years (37,3%). As the working experience increases, the special weight of currently employed people decreases, namely the share of those having the greatest working experience (31–40 years) is the least (15,3%).

The same tendency is observed on unemployed people with disability. Thus, the special weight having the greatest working experience (31–40 years) from this category is only 1%. The majority (51,6%) of unemployed people are those having 11–20 years of working experience. The special weight of persons with disability having working experience up to 10 years and more than 20 years is approximately the same – respectively 35,4% and 33,9% (picture 4).

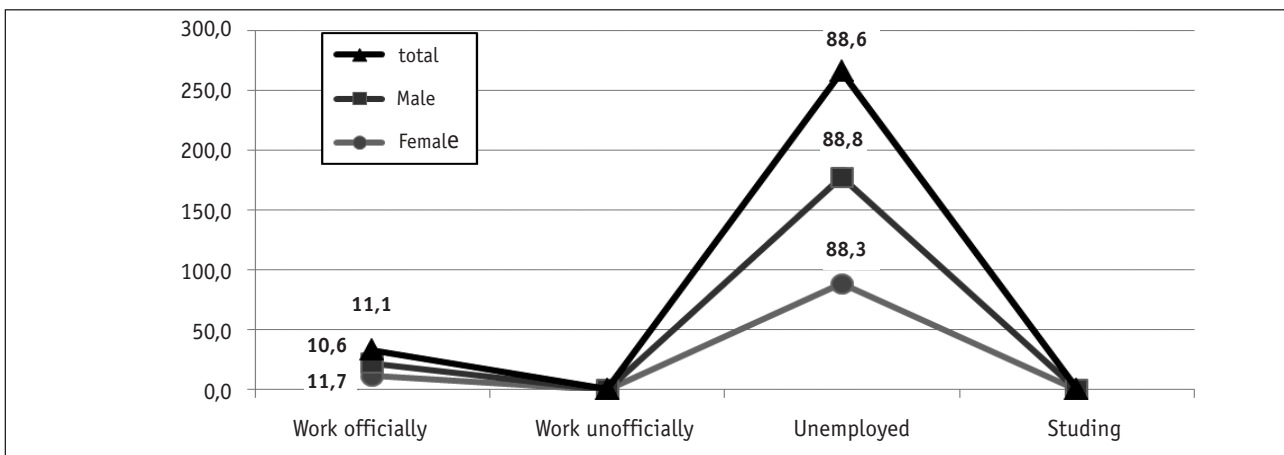
The ways of job searching and employment opportunities of the persons with disability who wants to work or to change the work (31,4%) causes interest. Some of the persons with disability have applied to different places in order to be employed, but its result is not satisfactory at all (picture 5).

As can be seen from the picture, 63% of persons with disability applying to the relatives and acquaintances, 61,9% applying to the enterprises and organizations, and 57,9% applying to employment service were offered unfavorable job. Only 1,2% of disabled persons who applied to the relatives and acquaintances, and very little share (0,9%) applying to employment service was provided with jobs.

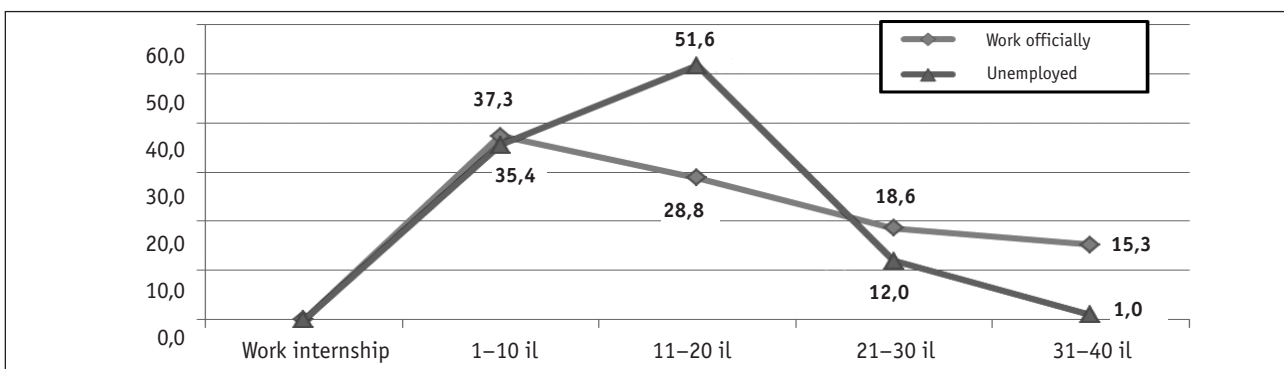
Picture 2. Distribution of disabled persons on the level of education depending on working experience (in per cent)



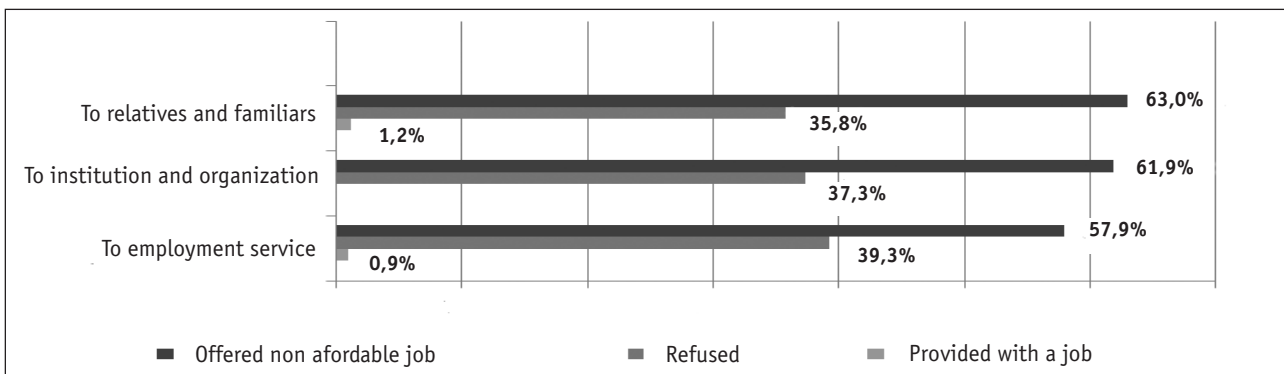
Picture 3. The current labour activity of persons with disabilities on gender distribution (in per cent)



Picture 4. Connection of current labour activities of disabled persons with the working experience (in per cent)



Picture 5. Results of applications related to works



It should be noted that, employment of the persons with disability directly by the enterprises and organizations has not been noted. At the same time great number (39,3%) of disabled persons applying to the employment services had refusal answer. Such a situation cannot be assessed unambiguously, because the employment of persons with disability, especially having 1st and 2nd group of disability is not legal. On the other side, they try to work by taking both their financial, and psychological situations.

The analysis of answers related to the wishes of disabled persons connected to the labour situation and purpose indicates that, the majority of them (75,2%) prefers to work with high salaries. 11,9% wants to work in the relevant work, only 2,4% wants to work in the intellectual work. A number of persons with disabilities (9%) having no other source of income apart from the pension agrees to be employed with any work in order to improve financial situation of the family.

It should be noted as the results of grouping of obtained information that, regardless of the sex, age, disability group, specialty of persons with disability, all of them firstly prefer tangible incentives.

More than of the persons with disability notes that they want to be employed with preferential conditions mainly for the purpose of forgetting their illnesses, increasing the financial situation and to act as a personality in the society (respectively 41%, 35,9%, 33,3%). At the same time, persons with disability willing to work at home conditions mentions the purposes such as to use my skills (25%), to forget the illness (5,1%), to increase the financial situation (3,6%) and to have communication with other persons (2,5%).

The vast majority of persons with disabilities who wish to increase its financial situation, to have conversation with other people, to act as a personality in the society (respectively 57,4%, 85%, 66,7%) try to work only in this labour collective. And almost half of persons with disabilities who wish to forget the illness and to use its ability (respectively 51,3% and 50%) also wants to work with labour collective.

It is interesting that, persons with disability striving to work with the purpose of acting as a personality in the society are eager to work only in labour collective (66,7%) and with the preferable conditions (33,3%). Among the disabled persons who mentioned other purposes there is nobody willing to work in household activity.

So, there were found several aspects of motives of persons with disability related to the employment: Thus, labour activity: 1) is an important source of improvement in their financial situation; 2) is one of the most important opportunities for them to communicate; 3) is the goal to help their family; 4) is the opportunity to realize their own potential; 5) is the means of forgetting their disease;

6) is the opportunity to be useful for society; 7) is the means of self-assertion.

The majority of persons with disability (88,9%) mentioned that they have no difficulties in connection with the improvement of disability degree, only 8,5% expressed their displeasure because they were sent for the additional examination.

The analysis show that, among the types of social services provided by the persons with disability the first place is taken by sanatorium treatment and the second place is taken by social assistance. Only 0,8% had any type of advice. Only 11,6% of disabled persons showed their attitude to the quality of provided social services, among them, 1,5% assessed as excellent, 2% good, 8,1% average.

The majority of persons with disability answering the question "What is important to take measures to integrate into society?" (50,7%) stated that they want to be treated. Along with the treatment, only financial motives are preferred in the other answers (improvement of financial situation, increase of the amount of pension, and high salaries), this is totally shown by 41,5% of the persons with disability.

Conclusion. So, investigations show that, events implemented in Azerbaijan Republic on the direction of integration of disabled persons to the society cannot be regarded as a summary of rehabilitation reforms, there should be carried out social programs on various directions including enlightenment of persons with disability (education, employment, organization of leisure time etc.). The following measures can be noted:

- creating favorable condition for employing disabled people within the framework of "State Program on Socio-Economic Development of the Regions of the Azerbaijan Republic for 2009-2013";
- organization of consulting service system for entrepreneurial activity of the persons with disability;
- organization of regular meetings, round tables on the problems of persons with disability among social partners, as well as interested NGOs, trade unions, entrepreneurs associations, international and local donors and government officials, and implementation of joint activities.

List of references

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