

# The role of mass media in the process of settlement of social problem of people with disabilities in modern Ukrainian society

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*Abstract – This article contains the results of research on the role of the media in the process of settlement of social problems of people with disabilities, the results of content analysis of periodicals on this issue, and the importance of social advertising (PSA) in this process.*

Keywords – mass media, social problem, people with disabilities, social aspect.

## I. Introduction

The number of social problems in Ukrainian society is constantly increasing. And so, there is a debate in society about who, and how, should be involved in solving and settlement social problems. Various social actors, including the media, are involved in this process. The position, the level of emotional coloration of a material presented to illustrate the social problem in one way or another affects the perception of the mass consciousness of complex social circumstances.

## II. Informing the public

The problem of people with disabilities is one of the critical social problems of modern society. Discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes are the negative manifestations of this problem. How media can help in the settlement of this problem? **First of all, it is important in this case to inform the public about the current state of the problem in society**, taking into account not only the medical aspects of the problem of people with disabilities, but also social aspects in the most. After all, often the “conditional” social barriers that establish a society for people with disabilities have the most negative consequences. At times, from the media coverage of the social problem of disability depends on what “conditional” barriers will exist in society in relation to people with this problem, which will be the public's attitude towards people with disabilities.

Content analysis of two periodicals: All-Ukrainian information-analytical weekly newspaper “Dzerkalo tyzhnia. Ukraina” and the Internet newspaper “Vysokyi zamok” for the period from January 1 to April 30, 2017 allowed to receive the following results: in the 16 issues of the weekly newspaper “Dzerkalo tyzhnia. Ukraina” found 8 materials relating to the problem of disability, and half of them, these are minor notes on the problem, while in the regional issues of the newspaper “Vysokyi zamok” found 20 materials that relating to the social problems of disability, it is from 120 issues of the

newspaper, and in them only 25% are full articles about the problem.

## III. “Degree” discussion of the social problem: the emotional coloring of materials

**Second, the media can, through their publications, raise the “degree” of discussing the social problem.** The study of emotional coloring of materials published in these issues and touching upon the problems of people with disabilities, has shown: the weekly newspaper “Dzerkalo tyzhnia. Ukraina”: 37.5% – materials of positive emotional color, 25% – negative, and 37.5% – neutral; The publication of the newspaper “Vysokyi zamok”: 45% positive and 45% negative emotional color and only 10% neutral.

That is to say, an analytical newspaper highlights the social problem of disability using more positively colored materials: certain achievements, victories, the same uses neutral information, and fewer publications, where the problem of disability appears in “negative tones” (increased mortality, discrimination, tragedy). In the newspaper “Vysokyi zamok” the number of positive and negative information is the same.

## IV. Creating Heroes

**Thirdly, through the media in the process of settlement of social problems, appear a heroes and anti-heroes.** In particular, the key heroes in text-based materials about people with disabilities are: 1) people with disabilities (“Dzerkalo tyzhnia. Ukraina” – 75%, “Vysokyi zamok” – 40%); 2) politicians or representatives of the government, that is, those who take on the role of resolving social problems (“Dzerkalo tyzhnia. Ukraina” – 25%; “Vysokyi zamok” – 55%); 3) “offenders”, that is, those who harm these people (“Dzerkalo tyzhnia. Ukraina” – 0; “Vysokyi zamok” – 5%). This difference is explained by the peculiarities of various periodicals and their target audience.

Analytical newspaper “Dzerkalo tyzhnia. Ukraina” is more focused on the social problem itself than on politics or anti-heroes, because there is supplied analytical information about the problem of disability, it is a less emotionally colored. In the regional newspaper “Vysokyi zamok” a large percentage of publications contain information about politicians, who in one way or another try to solve the aspects of the problem in society and thus gain support, commitment of people. Such information is better perceived precisely in the regional newspaper rather than in the all-Ukrainian analytical newspaper, where attention is focused on other issues.

## V. Social advertising (PSA)

**Fourthly, through the media broadcast social advertising, which is intended to demonstrate the “recipe” of settlement of social problems.** Last year there have been two vivid examples in the area of settling the issue of people with disabilities: this video “Disability does not limited. Limits discrimination!”, created by the NGO “Generation of Successful Action” within the framework of an information campaign against discrimination, supported

by the International Fund “Renaissance” in partnership with the Ukraine Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights [1], and the social advertising “Life without Barriers”, a video taken at the end of a two-year project with Italian and Bukovina partners “Social Rehabilitation and Inclusion of Children and with disabilities”[2].

The main idea of the first video is that it is that discrimination, not physical limitations caused a bigger problem in society. People with disabilities should have equal rights and opportunities in our society. In this video authors tried to draw people's attention to this problem and to change the social attitudes towards people with disabilities.

Another social advertising focuses on the barriers faced by people with disabilities, namely physical isolation, human compassion and bureaucratic indifference, and urge people to overcome these barriers, because in a society, in the state should be respect for a person, and accordingly, to ensure decent living conditions.

## Conclusions

Consequently, the media play an important role in the process of settlement of social problems. They can provide up-to-date information on available social issues, can excite an emotional wave of public reaction to these problems, can as create barriers to overcoming problems, as destroy them. With the help of social advertising, the media affect people's minds and thus help of settlement of social problem that exists in society.

## References

- [1] “Disability does not limited. Limits discrimination!” [Video material] – Access mode: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4W4JWWhvq8E>
- [2] Social advertising “Life without Barriers” [Video material] – Access mode: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_6kkAllhJFA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6kkAllhJFA)