

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION BEING A PART OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL SPACE: ON THE WAY TO INCLUSIVE CULTURE

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Abstract

The relevance of the presented research is conditioned by the need to comprehend modern sociocultural tendencies, both global and European ones, which find a very different response in the Russian society. It's a fact that the current changes in the gender policy of the United States and the EU countries are not only rejected by Russian scientists, but are also defined as a crisis of traditional values associated with deviation from the human civilization cultural development vector. Here we note that the tendencies towards androgyny / gender erosion, stimulated by the patterns of global culture which are rapidly spreading all around the world are perceived in the same way. Nevertheless, the Russian socio-cultural development does not go beyond global processes, since the country is among those world communities, among which the attitude to social and cultural otherness is perceived as a complex but an unequivocally considered problem within the framework of humanistic morality. Thus, in Russia, first of all, it is about respecting human rights and strengthening the value of humanity, ethical rules and norms of treating people with limited health opportunities. Accordingly, speaking about changing the social attitude to other / Different people as a process of an inclusive culture emerging in Russia should proceed from the fact that people with disabilities fall into the circle of people deserving special attention from all citizens.

The aim of the study is to understand various aspects of incorporating inclusive education in the Russian system of sociocultural coordinates in the context of overcoming the social discrimination and creating a subsystem of opportunities for the self-realization of all people without exception, including those with limited health opportunities.

This work was carried out with the help of socio-cultural analysis, expanded by the possibilities of cultural philosophical reflection. This approach allowed not only to disclose all the problems and prospects for the formation of a system of inclusive education in modern Russia, but also to answer a number of questions related to understanding the significance of achieving "unity in diversity" both in the context of the formation of an inclusive culture and in the context of harmonization of social relations.

The paper analyzes the trends of a special type of educational paradigm being formed in Russia. This paradigm is based on the humanistic values of partnership and openness, which allows everyone, regardless of personality, to be meaningful both for himself and for the world as a whole. Various approaches to the phenomenon of inclusion as a new socio-cultural concept have been considered. The analysis of avalanche changes in the geography of Russian specialists dealing with the problems of inclusive education in the last two decades is presented.

Conclusions of the research show that there is small but unique experience in Russia, the experience of including children with disabilities into a single educational space. All the studies of this topic are very kaleidoscopic today, and therefore they require a serious scientific-methodological and cultural philosophical justification. The lack of experience, of proven methods for working in an inclusive educational space, and the unwillingness of a sufficiently large number of educators to take responsibility for finding ways to solve

complex problems arising in the process of work, responsibility for the results of this work with the problems of bringing these ideas of inclusion to practice have been revealed today.

Keywords: Russia, reflection, inclusive culture, inclusive education, Other.

1. INTRODUCTION

Socio-cultural globalization has drawn all the countries of the modern world into its flow. Reflecting on the trends of socio-cultural development associated with the emergence of new phenomena in culture, it is obvious that many of them, both global and European, are perceived differently in the Russian society. On the one hand, not sharing the fundamental changes in the gender policy of the United States and the European Union, Russian scientists have doubts whether these trends are related to the crisis of spirituality, manifested in the rejection of traditional values, whether they are a marker of deviation from the cultural vector of human civilization. Other trends are perceived in Russia in the same way, among such there is the problem of androgyny/gender erosion which is actively discussed, stimulated by samples of global culture and which is rapidly spreading around the world. On the other hand, it doesn't mean that the socio-cultural development of Russia goes away from the global processes, as the country is among those world communities, which perceive the attitude to social and cultural *otherness* as a complex problem, which is though clearly considered within the framework of humanistic morality. It is primarily about respect for human rights and strengthening the value of humanity, ethical rules and norms of attitude to people with disabilities in the society, in the spirit of a categorical imperative, according to I. Kant, which does not involve any moral violations. Accordingly, when talking about changing the attitude of society to *other/different* people, it should be assumed that people with disabilities/invalids fall into the circle of those who deserve special attention from all citizens.

The desire to develop civilized relations based on universal values, such as respect for the rights and freedoms of an individual, awareness of importance of an individual's uniqueness for society are transformed today into a global intercivilizational wave of support for socially important projects. The understanding that disabled persons' social isolation should be considered as a violation of democratic human rights, amplifying the manifestation of inequality, has led to the fact that scientific and political discussions about the questions of independence and possible social and cultural self-realization of all people, which is especially important for people with disabilities, have come to the forefront. These trends are reflected in many international documents: International Bill of Human Rights; Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10.12.1948); Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (adopted in New York on 13.12.2006, etc.)

There is no doubt that the *Others'* needs for rehabilitation, adaptation and integration into social and cultural life should be realized at all levels of culture – through the system of education and science, through participation in cultural and leisure life, which allows to strengthen the social status and connections, the subjective world of the individual, mastering new practices and forms of behavior. All this has been developed in various aspects of life in modern Russia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

One of the major steps towards strengthening humanistic values is currently the world project on creating a unified social environment of interaction for all people, without exception, the so-called "inclusive society". The social and cultural rehabilitation of people proposed within the framework of the project, which means creating conditions for the continuous development and internal growth of disabled people's personality is associated with the processes of inclusion and involvement into the cultural community, the acquisition of skills and abilities of "special people" through their involvement in creativity and art. As a result of such involvement into social communications, codes are gradually changing and the model of collective identity is being developed. In turn, the system of identification features of the society includes the recognition of plurality, admissibility of other socio-cultural identities. "In the choice of collective identity, as in a process of searching for value and semantic bases for interaction between social groups, one of the main criteria is the consonance with one's culture, opening towards the "Other" 's culture (Astafyeva, 2015, p.11). Understanding the achievement of "unity of diversity" is filled with a new meaning: "we" is not perceived as a monolith, but as a process of interaction of people, different but sharing common values, interests, moving in the same direction.

Scientists and politicians are asking what is happening, while recognizing cultural differences, and sometimes even escalating these differences (if there are no grounds for this)... Answering this question, O. A. Rumyantsev, A. Y. Shemanov emphasize the dangers of both over-emphasizing differences and of ignoring the problems of otherness, believing that in the society " there is the opposite situation all the time: the leveling of all those differences that are exaggerated by others." (Rumyantsev, Shemanov, 2009, p.647).

These processes are natural both for the education system and for the Russian culture, where the emerging vector for their serious interdepartmental interaction is quite noticeable. In its center, there is an interesting and useful plan for the transition to a new worldview paradigm, which has yet to be implemented. First of all, we should pay attention to the modernization and implementation of civilizational mechanisms that have radically changed the conditions of interpersonal interaction in the transition into the informational society and new communicative technologies. It is through the creation of technical and technological complex for people, regardless of their physical health limitations, the basis for self-realization is formed. The emergence of communicative loci, often less determined by social stratification, also stimulates a change in the whole architecture of human relations.

An opportunity to feel an equal society member is more than valuable for a person with disabilities. We are witnesses of how the world, getting rid of its discriminatory essence, turned to face the people with health problems and that allowed us to see how people with disabilities discover their unique core — originally and openly. History remembers many outstanding people whose life was connected with overcoming health restrictions. Despite the fact that the lives of Stephen William Hawking, Christopher Reeve, David Blunkett, Thomas Edison, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Francisco de Goya, Ludwig van Beethoven, Helen Keller, Miguel de Cervantes, Sarah Bernhardt, Vincent van Gogh, Ray Charles were a constant overcoming of all sorts of limitations, while public attention was focused on their personas, the disabilities of many of them are almost unknown. Their descendants remember and appreciate the unique results of their outstanding activities.

At present, all over the world, and Russia is no exception, there is a change of the whole architectonics of social space through the formation of a new culture – a culture of open opportunities for personal and social realization of each member of modern society, including people with disabilities. In the context of these changes, the most noticeable is the introduction of inclusive education into the educational process. This is a special type of educational paradigm based on the values of openness, partnership, dialogue, allowing everyone, regardless of their abilities, to learn and interact in a common educational space.

The problem of creating an inclusive society is in the field of view of philosophers, culturologists and sociologists in Russia as one of the most relevant ones today. Today, such prominent philosophers as A. Y. Shemanov and E. L. Yakovleva are doing a serious study of the inclusive space establishment in Russia. Their researches on the problems of *inclusion* are unique, as they have no analogues in the Russian research space.

A. Y. Shemanov is considering different aspects of inclusive interaction, drawing our attention to the systemic transformation of inclusion which is positioned today "as a policy to overcome this potential of stigmatization of the "other" as something foreign and rejected, typical of such attitude" (Shemanov, 2016, p.653).The researcher focuses on the creative potential of inclusive education in the context of harmonization of social interaction, on the problems of "understanding the attitude to a person who has physical and mental specifics as to an incarnate living being" (Shemanov, 2014, p.15) from the perspective of inclusive anthropology. He examines in detail the possibilities of digital technologies in the inclusive educational space, as well as various aspects of socio-cultural consequences of deviations in the personality development.

E. L. Yakovleva makes a very significant attempt to analyze a new socio - cultural concept — *inclusion* — in her monograph "Penetrating into the worlds of inclusion" from the perspective of cultural and philosophical analysis. In her research, the author states the total technologization of the modern society, where "there is an intensive devaluation of classical images of culture/society / person, which entails the formation of a new paradigm of life and its values" (Yakovleva, 2, 2015, p.4). The researcher insists that "debiological processes in people lead to their genetic, technical, and even virtual design, that is why integrity is replaced with fragmentation, with its typical absence of internal core and the formation of a new quality – transformativity" (Yakovleva, 2, 2015, p.6). The constant transformations of modern society cause "society to actualize the figure of Another" (Yakovleva, 2, 2015, p.7), and therefore some natural base is formed for the a new inclusive Being establishment. E. L. Yakovleva draws our attention to the destructive nature of these transformations for the modern world, their anthropological crisis. Inclusion is considered here from the position of the being abnormality. The monograph presents a detailed analysis of outstanding people's lives; those people had different behavioral characteristics, defined by the author as non-format/Otherness

(Yakovleva, 2, 2015, p. 21). The author systematically analyzed various aspects of relationship with the Other ("I-you"), described prospects of inclusion formation in the perspective of support of the individual creative potential. The existence of a person in an inclusive paradigm is considered by E. L. Yakovleva as the ability to be, and therefore to move forward, which is opposed to the position of having/possessing, .e. treating everything as one's property. The monograph presents the meaning-forming coordinates of inclusive existence.

We shall note that all the studies of this topic, existing in Russia today, are very kaleidoscopic. The idea of inclusion came to Russia with Western social and cultural trends, and they had the manner of enforcing educational, cultural and behavioural imperatives that require serious scientific and methodological, cultural and philosophical justification in the light of Russian national peculiarities, its traditional values, in the context of national cultural-historical paradigm formation.

The need for cultural-philosophical reflection of inclusive educational approaches and their transformation in the Russian socio-cultural field during, that have been going on for the last two decades, determined not only the direction of this study, but also the choice of its methodological basis, where the main place was given to comparative and socio-cultural analysis of inclusive education as a phenomenon of modern culture.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strengthening inclusive education in today's world is timely, as the world health organization (WHO) warns: "In the years to come, disability will be a growing concern as its prevalence increases. This is the result of an ageing population, an increased risk of disability among older persons, and a global increase in the prevalence of such chronic conditions as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and mental disorders" (World Disability Report, p.5). The increasing number of people with health disabilities will have a negative impact on economic and social life of the society, causing the problems associated with the full self-realization of an individual in the society, where the basic human opportunities "to work, to be independent from other people, to get a good education, to join the society to have friends, family, like-minded people" (Sudakova, Sapelnikov, Popova, 2016, p.34) will be very much in demand.

These problems require systemic solutions aimed at the formation of a society, which consciously solves urgent problems in the vector of social justice, humanism and social significance of each of its members, society, where "culture that opens up the world of Other people and the opportunity to communicate with Others, is an important condition for human existence" (Astafyeva, 2015, p.14). The creation of socio-cultural mechanisms of "adjustment" to the Other's world, contributing to the implementation of this idea, is most effective in terms of retransmission of the principles of socio-cultural existence of the nation in the educational system. Education, presenting the world of his ancestors to a man, helps him to find his own socio-cultural Self, to feel, understand and accept the world of Another, to realize the importance of some basic opportunities for each of us. Obviously, "the vocation, purpose, task of every person is to comprehensively develop all their abilities, to make a personal contribution to the history, to the society progress, its culture, the meaning of society existence" (Shipovskaya, 2008, p.25). In this context, the main task of modern society is to provide every citizen with equal self-realization opportunities. Awareness of this fact provoked the emergence of a new socio – cultural phenomenon — movement towards the *inclusion*.

The term *inclusion* (from French *inclusif*— 'including'), was actively used in the XX century in the United States, and later in the EU in the study of ethnic minority issues and has experienced a significant transformation since then. Today inclusion as a phenomenon of culture has a many-sided definition: as the inclusion "into a single macro sphere of social existence of all people without exception, where the need for something social is of decisive importance" (Sudakova, Sapelnikov, Popova, 2016, p.13). That is, the main value today is an individual's ability to realize him/herself in society, to create one's cultural existence. Therefore, the very concept of inclusive education, previously defined as disabled people's inclusion into a single educational environment is being gradually transformed. The emphasis is shifted to the creation of a common educational environment for all, without exception, where each of the participants has special educational needs, dictated by individual characteristics of the individual and requiring the construction of individual educational routes in this unified environment of interpersonal interaction. This approach not only allows to avoid the medicalization of disability problems, to enable people with disabilities to integrate painlessly into social interaction, without focusing on their individual limitations, but also helps each participant of the educational process to feel its unique nature, to understand its importance for themselves and society as a whole, to tune into the embodiment of their individual development path.

Thinking of the phenomenon of inclusion, it is important to recall that the landmark event here was the "Declaration on principles, policies and practices in the sphere of education for persons with special

educational needs" adopted in Salamanca in 1994. Decades later, it can be stated that this document has launched a mechanism to eliminate globally discriminatory attitudes towards people with disabilities, the result of which was the active inclusion of people with disabilities or restrictions into the normal social life - the movement towards the *inclusion*. The fact that the winner of a television competition "Voice" for children, Daniil Pluzhnikov, and a professional singer with disabilities Yulia Samoilova were publicly recognized in Russia, shows that the culture of *inclusion* has found its place in our society.

Given the fact that one seventh of the world's population has some health restrictions (World Disability Report, p.8), the possibility of such a large part of the population to be independent, to make their own contribution to social life, is of serious importance from all points of view, including the economic one, which is very important in the context of the protracted global crisis. The change of attitude to this category of people affected all the existing social institutions. The dominance of the value component is significant in this situation, where the educational model has always had a key role: "The most comfortable environment associated with the formation of the axiosphere and its value dominants can be considered the educational system, including that one associated with the model of inclusive culture" (Yakovleva, 1, 2015, p.106). The Institute of education is the most stable and at the same time the most mobile social and cultural Institute. Taking care of the preservation of traditions, it is constantly changing both in content and in mechanisms of experience transfer. Modern educational practices, based on the principles, traditional for the Russian system, actively using the most advanced information and communication trends, contribute to the creation of a new open culture of interaction with Others, where there is no place for discrimination on any grounds- the culture of *inclusion*.

Inclusive education is widely practiced in many countries around the world. It also found its supporters in the Russian educational system. This fact is evidenced with dozens of conferences held in recent years in Russia, which consecrated various aspects of creating an inclusive educational environment. The number of participants of the largest international scientific and practical conference "Inclusive education", held on the basis of the Moscow city psychological and pedagogical university— the center of inclusive ideas in Russia since 2011, is impressive. The number of those who wish to share their experience in creating an inclusive learning environment is quite large: in 2013, "The conference was attended by representatives of 56 regions of the Russian Federation and 20 foreign experts from Germany, Great Britain, Spain, Finland, USA, Latvia" (Inclusive education: results, experience and prospects: materials of the III International scientific and practical conference, 2015, p.12.). The conference was held in June 2017 and visited by no less impressive team: "more than 570 participants from 55 regions of the Russian Federation, 16 foreign experts (Germany, USA, UK, Sweden, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine) took part in the conference in 2017" (Resolution IV of The international scientific and practical conference "Inclusive education: the continuity of inclusive culture and practice" Moscow, 2017).

Even such a small statistical collection shows that the geography of specialists interested in the problems of inclusive education in our country is very extensive — the organizers of the conferences were universities of different spheres: from Federal basic universities to small universities of urban subordination. The discussion of various aspects of inclusive education being introduced into the domestic practice is now taking an avalanche character, which indicates that the idea of inclusive education, adopted at the legislative level, is actively promoted by its supporters in society – scientists, teachers, public figures, parents of children with disabilities.

We can state that in Russia is gradually accumulating its own practical experience of learning in the field of inclusive education. This experience is based not only on the experience of foreign countries, but also on the reflection of the best local techniques. The conclusion that our country has a little, but its own experience of inclusive interaction, in terms of both general and additional creative education, was unexpected. Analyzing the experience of enthusiastic teachers, it becomes obvious that children with disabilities, joining a class of a "creative" teacher, gradually improve/adapt to the learning process and further show a high level of compensation, and sometimes of achievements, which confirms the fact that the inclusive potential of creative activity is limitless. "Methods of development of emotional-semantic sphere of disabled people could include: involvement in meaningful activities (arts, sports, social work); involvement in reflective activities (awareness, dialogue, understanding)" (Matsukevich, 2015, p.89) — O. J. Matsukevich believes. The fact is that creative activity is transformative in itself, it forms socially significant personal qualities. This experience is most noticeable in the system of additional education, in cultural institutions, as well as in art schools, where training is conducted with the construction of an individual trajectory of development, also in group activities (theater, choral art, orchestral performance, etc.). The proof of that can be the experience of many years of music lessons conducted by A. I. Borozdin with a girl diagnosed with "imbecility". The result of this work was the full rehabilitation of the child who received higher professional education, started working

and created a family. This experience was presented to the discussion of the participants of the First All-Russian conference "Possibilities of rehabilitation of children with mental and physical disabilities by means of education", held in 1995 by the Institute of pedagogical innovations of RAS and perceived as a miracle (Zaretskiy, Gordon, 2015, p.25).

This fact is confirmed by the experience described in the work of I. S. Belik: "Music against deafness: the experience of individual music lessons with deaf children under the program of children's music school" (Belik, 2000). There are many such "miracles" in the Russian practice, but many of them can not be analyzed, because no one and nowhere described them, the news is spread "by word of mouth", which is understandable. The idea to systematically analyze their teaching experience and constantly share their findings with colleagues was adopted in the pedagogical community relatively recently, with the emergence of a sufficient number of technological platforms, with the increasing attention to the improvement of pedagogical skills, the exchange of experience through conferences, round tables, symposia, etc. These trends are associated with the awareness of the importance of the message "education through life" first in the pedagogical community, and later at the state level.

The use of inclusive technologies in Russia is supported today by legislative initiatives. On March 17, 2011 the government of the Russian Federation approved the state program of the Russian Federation "Accessible environment" for 2011 – 2015. On December 29, 2012, Russia adopted a new law "On education", declaring that "inclusive education — ensuring equal access to education for all students taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities" (On education / Federal law of December 29, 2012). These initiatives have launched a mechanism of state support for inclusive education in Russia. Following them, some documentation regulating the work of educational institutions of different types was initiated; professional standards of training in an inclusive environment were developed. Departments and faculties dealing with the problems of inclusive education have been opened in Russian universities. The flagship of research in the field of inclusive education in Russia and the development of practical recommendations is today the Institute of problems of inclusive education of the Moscow city psychological and pedagogical university, established in 2009. The Institute is the base for a scientific and methodological center engaged in the study of "psychological and pedagogical technologies that ensure the continuity of psychological and pedagogical support of the implementation of the FSES of preschool, basic general and secondary education". (About the project. Scientific and methodological development of succession technologies of psychological and pedagogical support of the implementation of modern FSES of general education and their testing).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the trends of inclusive ideas being introduced into the Russian practice, we will pay close attention to the results of scientific research in this direction. The dissertation researches in the field of inclusive education by A. Y. Chigrina, Yu. V. Melnik, O. S. Kuzmina, V. V. Khitryuk, O. V. Karynbaeva, N. G. Sigal appeared in recent years. They allow us to talk about the emerging interest in the scientific development of this area. The white spot associated with this topic is gradually being filled, though with fragmented, but very valuable, relevant methodological and practical recommendations aimed at harmonizing interaction in the inclusive educational environment.

We shall note that all the studies of this topic, existing today, are very fragmented. The ideas of inclusion, which came to us with western socio-cultural trends, are now sort of enforcing educational, cultural and behavioral imperatives, and therefore they require a serious scientific, methodological, cultural and philosophical justification, taking into account the national characteristics of Russia, its traditional values, in the context of the national cultural and historical paradigm formation.

It took the proponents of inclusive ideas two decades to transform misunderstanding, mistrust and sometimes outright confrontation into a phenomenon protected by the state. The current situation is radically different from the nineties of the XX century, when the first educational institutions with inclusive classes were opened. Of course, there is still a rejection of *inclusion*. This is due not to the denial of the idea as it was at the end of the last century, but to the lack of experience, knowledge, proven methods for working in an inclusive educational environment, with the unwillingness of a sufficiently large number of teachers to take responsibility for finding ways to solve complex problems arising in the process of work, responsibility for the results of this work, with the problems revealed today concerning the idea of inclusion implementation in practice. There is also underestimation of the work of those teachers-enthusiasts who are involved in the inclusion actively enough but do not feel any support from the modern society. It is obvious that the more active response the idea of inclusive education finds in the modern society, the more problems arise in its implementation into reality. The life of a disabled person is more difficult than the life of a person who does

not have serious health problems, and therefore only healthy people can provide serious support to people for whom *inclusion* is the last hope for a harmonious life in society.

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