

Family, Care, and Independent Living: A Study of Gender Perspective

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In Japan, in discussions on independent living in the community of persons with disabilities, one should consider the persons' relationships with their families. In this country, family care tends to be taken for granted. It is the norm that the family takes care of individuals as lovingly as possible, except when this is not possible due to old age or illness. In particular, when people with congenital disabilities aspire to live independently, they are often asked by those around them "why are you trying to live independently when you have a family?" In many cases, individuals do not have sufficient income to live independently in the community. Therefore, although the service system is currently better than before, many individuals lead a family-dependent life.

Several laws and institutions hold families accountable for the care of their dependents. Hence, in many families, female members support the daily lives of people with disabilities. To promote the independent living of people with disabilities, it is necessary to reexamine the nature of Japanese society, where the family alone is responsible for the care of its dependents.