

Sustainable Strategies for Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disability in Potiskum Town, Yobe State

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Abstract

The objectives of the Nigeria nation-state as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) include, among others, the creation of just and egalitarian society, the building of a great and buoyant economy and making the nation a land of bright opportunity for its citizenry. Current emphasis across the globe for sustainable development is through the equalization of opportunities for all irrespective of gender and abilities. This research was set out to investigate what sustainable strategies for economic empowerment of persons with disability in Potiskum town Yobe state. A total of 300 respondents consist of different types of persons with disability, their parent and social workers. The major instrument used for the collection of data was check-list type of questionnaire/interviews, simple percentage statistics used to analyze data. The findings of this work revealed that, many persons with disabilities could be economically empowered by rehabilitation/habilitation of the remaining abilities than e.g typewriting, computer, leather work, weaving, art and craft e.t.c lack of these, result into their destination, beggary and idleness. Finally, suggestions were made.

Keywords: *Sustainable Strategies, Economic Empowerment and Disability*

Background of the Study

A disturbing nation-wide phenomenon is the presence of diverse categories of persons with physical abilities roaming our towns and villages earning a living through begging. Many of these Nigerians are concealed in their homes, sentence to perpetual parasitism and dependence on the society. In contrast to this, however, the objectives of the Nigerian nation state include the creation of just and egalitarian society, a great dynamic economy and a land of bright opportunities for all (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004).

However, current emphasis across the globe for sustainable development is through the equalization of opportunities equalization of opportunities and access to societal life are efforts emphasis in order to enhance social and political inclusion/integration (Salamanca Declaration action, 1994). Unfortunately in most parts of developing countries like Nigeria, Potiskum, not only the needs of persons with disability utterly neglected by both communities and governments, there are in addition various instance of denial of persons with disabilities basic rights (Life, Education, Habilitation/Rehabilitation and Works). The high rate of destitution, beggary and idleness among persons with disability in rural and urban communities is first an indication of government and community neglect (Kolo and Isa, 1995). However, this research work seeks solution to the following interesting question:

1. What believes the community/government have about the value and worth of persons with disability?
2. To what length person with disability caught in the trap of remaining completely excluded from participation in national economic development?
3. What sustainable strategies would the community/government adopt for economic empowerment of persons with disability in Potiskum, Yobe state and Nigeria?

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out the strategies adopted by the government/community in the empowerment of persons with disability in Pokiskum town.

Research Questions

This research intends to provide answer to the following questions:

1. To what extent are persons with disability empowered for economic participation in the society?
2. What sustainable strategies to be adopted for economic empowerment of persons with disability in potiskum yobe state?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided this research and further focused-up the research questions raised in this study.

H1 There is significance relationship between the destitution, beggary and idleness life among persons with disability in rural/urban community and lack of sustainable strategies for economic empowerment”.

H2 Persons with disability have some quantum of ability inform of physical and mental power which enable them to develop it opportunities, facilities and favorable conditions are been provided”.

Review of Literature

This millennium emphasis on development in the developing countries has been on sustainable strategies. Development is also largely planned along effective harnessing of human and natural resource. In this quest for sustainable paths of national development, unfortunately, the role and place of persons with disability have long not been recognized in a richly endowed nation like Nigeria. The consequence of harnessing human resource exclusive of persons with disability unfortunately too has only exacerbated the sore of nation life in terms of large segments of the population who have been dehumanized, destituted and cultured into perpetual dependence (Kolo, 2002).

Kolo (1997), further point out that, unfortunately, habilitation/rehabilitation efforts are in adequate, ill-planned and ill-executed for remarkable and sustainable effort for economic empowerment of persons with disability. In the late 1970's when the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria embarked on the now ill-fated institutionalized rehabilitation scheme in eight (8) centres, across the country, little thought was given to its potentials to encourage the segregation of persons with disability in the national economic life (Togonu-Bikersteth, 1996). At the inception of the centres, it was the attitude of telling all persons with disability "to go get treated" in places meant for their likes with time not only were the centres ill-equipped and inadequate by all accounts (Isyaku, 1996), they had either become isolationist sanctuaries for destituted persons with disabilities or were turning out heavily stigmatized graduates whose reintegration into their respective societies was met with attitude of neglect, rejection or dependence.

Unfortunately, both the era of economic prosperity and economic down turn in Nigeria only exacerbated the tide of isolation for persons with disability. In the era of economic prosperity, comparatively, very little was done in term of provisions and the need to get disabled persons fully integrated into national life. In this era of economic down-turn, it has been the problems of increased destitution and dehumanization of persons with disability. This greatly accounts for mass of destitutes of disabled persons in the nation today. And the most unfortunate consequence for national development is the complete segregation of disabled persons from social, economic and political life of the nation.

Research Methodology

The research is of survey nature which seeks to find out and describe economic empowerment of persons with disability in Potiskum town, Yobe state. As survey design, all variables involved in this type of research have been taken into consideration and the instruments (questionnaire/interview) have been designed to take care of such variables involved. Population of the study was consisted the crippled, blind, deaf, parents and social workers total of 300 drawn from markets, filling stations, police/army checked points, by mosques, churches and road junctions in Potiskum town. However, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. The detail of respondents by sex, type of disability and begging location are shown in table 1 to 3 (1-3).

Instruments used, the study developed a questionnaire/interview called check-list for the study. Items on the questionnaire/interview were derived base on content relevant/validity. It consist two sections "A" and "B", section "A" sought information on respondents gender, type of disability and begging locations. Section "B" sought information on economic empowerment skills the disabled persons could be trained at the rehabilitation center/workshop. The questionnaire/interview check-list was critiqued by colleagues and experts to ensure its validity. Some items were consequently improved.

Data collection: The questionnaire/interview were administered with an aid of interpreter to the respondents (disabled person) found at check points, filling stations, motor packs, markets, mosques, churches, e.t.c in potiskum town. Respondents responded promptly, there was 100% return. Simple percentage statistics procedure was employed in analysis of data, which is expressing respondents express to a given question(s).

Result and Discussion

Avenues of employment available to persons with disability, they may be self-employment, or employed by public or private sectors after which been at rehabilitation/workshop centres. The result of analysis shown from the table (4) indicates that 83.3% of the respondents have not heard of rehabilitation centres available, 73.3% of the respondents think the person with disability have some personalities that can be trained at rehabilitation centres in their immediate community, 83.3% of the respondents are willing to attend rehabilitation in their immediate society where by counseling services available. Reasonable percentage of the respondents agreed that, person with disability can be trained in typewriting, computer, leatherworks, tie and die, weaving, soap making, art and craft, poultry, barbing, hair dressing, tailoring, carpentry and fishery.

Conclusion

Persons with disability have some remaining personalities inform of mental and physical power which enable them to develop it opportunities, facilities and favorable conditions are available, in other words, any person with disability has in him the potential for economic empowerment, however, it is the environment that will determine the extent which potential can be realized so as to:

- a. Enable them have something doing
- b. Stop such persons from becoming beggars
- c. Enable them have a share in the economy of the community
- d. Enable them to contribute in the economic development of the nation
- e. Enable them raise families of their own
- f. Bring back the disabled persons from economic isolation and segregation held on them by the normal persons

Recommendations

1. Nearly all disabled persons have vocational assets than are lost through their impairment and it is only needed to develop their remaining skills and capacities through physical restoration, counseling, training and placement. Government could do this by establishing Community-Based Habilitation and Rehabilitation centres instead of Urban-Based Rehabilitation centres which proved ill-equipped, ill-planned, un-cultural and in adequate system.
2. Economic empowerment of persons with disability has to be practical and functional to ensure its sustainability. It is recommendeds that the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) is an agency of government trusted for full implementation of this policy.
3. Effective counseling service should be provided to the persons with disability by government/community concerning self-appraisal, positive self-concept and self-worth and values.

Appendix

Table 1: Respondents by Gender

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	160	53.3
Female	140	46.7
Total	300	100

Source: Field work 2015

Table 2: Respondents by type of Disability

Type of Disability	Number	Percentage
Crippled	84	28
Amputation	78	26
Blind	122	40.7
Deaf	4	1.3
Multi	5	1.7
None	7	2.3
Total	300	100

Source: Field work 2015

Table 3: Respondents by begging Location

Begging location	Number	Percentage
Police/Army checking point	57	19
Market	48	16
Motor park	52	17.3
Filling station	43	14.3
Road junctions	28	9.3
Church site	22	7.3
Mosque	50	16.7
Total	300	100

Source: Field work 2015

Table 4: Avenues of employment available to persons with disability, they may be self-employed or employed by public or private sectors after which been trained at Rehabilitation Centres

				Sure %	%
1	Have you heard of rehabilitation centre?	10 3.3%	250 83.3%	40 13.3%	300 100%
2	I think crippled/amputated person can be trained at rehabilitation centre in the community	220 73.3%	50 16.7%	30 10%	300 100%
3	I will be willing to attend rehabilitation training in my community	250 83.3%	40 13.3%	10 3.3%	300 100%
4	I will be willing to accept counselling	201 67%	90 30%	9 3%	300 100%
5	The disabled can be trained in typewriting	170 67%	50 16.7%	80 26.7%	300 100%
6	The disabled can be trained in computer	200 66.7%	60 20%	40 13.3%	300 100%
7	The disabled can be trained in leatherwork	240 80%	30 10%	30 10%	300 100%
8	The disabled can be trained in tie and die	210 70%	90 30%	00 00%	300 100%
9	The disabled can be trained in weaving	211 70.3%	72 24%	17 5.7%	300 100%
10	The disabled can be trained in soap making	300 100%	00 00%	00 00%	300 100%
11	The disabled can be trained in art and craft	260 86.7%	30 10%	10 3.3%	300 100%

12	The disabled can be trained in poultry	220 73.3%	80 26.7%	00 00%	300 100%
13	The disabled can be trained in barbing	260 86.7%	30 10%	10 3.3%	300 100%
14	The disabled can be trained in blacksmith	172 57.3%	50 16.7%	78 26%	300 100%
15	The disabled can be trained in hair dressing	200 66.7%	40 13.3%	60 20%	300 100%
16	The disabled can be trained in tailoring	270 90%	30 10%	00 00%	300 100%
17	The disabled can be trained in dice making	200 66.7%	90 30%	10 3.3%	300 100%
18	The disabled can be trained in carpentry	210 70%	50 16.7%	40 13.3%	300 100%
19	The disabled can be trained in fishery	240 80%	40 13.3%	20 6.7%	300 100%

Source: Field work 2015

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