



SECTION FIVE



SPECIAL NEED EDUCATION DIALOGUE WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES

This section has eight chapters and all centre of disability as a loss phenomenon and society's reactions to the loss. Society has been accused of creating handicaps that PWDs experience in the society. In addition, the section dwells on how persons with disability cope or succumb to their loss. The social actions of the society to either increase access to the inclusive society or to create barriers to the same society were treated. Other issues treated include society's reversal of handicaps, attitudes change, labelling, stigmatization, adjustment to disability, psychological implications of various disabilities, the disadvantaged (adults with disability and nomads) It is concluded that if we are to birth inclusive society in this country psychosocial issues including attitudes and attitude change, stigmatization, prejudice, marginalization of PWDs must be addressed. Happy reading.



CHAPTER 31

SOCIETY CAN REVERSE HANDICAP IT CREATED

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Introduction

The society can reverse handicap it created by removing every negative structure and barrier to the advantage of persons with disabilities (PWDs). This is an indication that the society is not inclusive, ideal for the PWDs. Every member of the society has equal rights and privileges as well as opportunities to access the physical environment, including persons on wheelchair. A society that balances every action, rights and privileges is what PWDs need to feel accepted, confident, valued, and participatory like other members of the society. Attitudes towards PWDs affect the way the society think and behave towards them; affect the mindsets of PWDs and how they view other members of their society. Discriminations against PWDs devalue them and make environment inaccessible to them. A society that is inclusive is what professionals in special needs education, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, human rights activists target to achieve.

Handicap is a disadvantage resulting from impairment or disability that limits the social role of a person. It can be described as a set of behaviours towards persons with disabilities (Ugbo, 2017). Ugbo stated further that it is a set of theories and/or practices that promote unequal and unjust treatment of people because of real or assumed physical, mental or sensory disabilities. However, the desired objective in this context, is a society free of all handicaps ranging from hostile environment, negative attitude, poverty to social and cultural discrimination. To reverse handicaps created by the society is to engage legal, economic, social and psychological means and every stakeholder such as the special needs professionals, international organizations, non-governmental agencies, human rights activists and PWDs should be involved in advocacy and volunteerism to achieve the desired target. Furthermore, PWDs have different types of impairments that create handicaps when interacting with the physical, social and psychological aspects of the society. The National Policy on Education (2013) categorized PWDs into visual, hearing, physical/health, intellectual, emotional/behavioural, speech/language, learning, multiple impairments, the gifted and talented as well as the albinos. These group of people living with disabilities are faced with a lot of challenges as they interact with the society at large.

The social model of disability was created by PWDs themselves and looks at the handicap created by society. The social model seeks to remove unnecessary



handicap which prevent PWDs from participating in society, accessing work and living independently. The social model asks what can be done to remove exclusion to inclusion. According to Ozoji, (2005) there are five tenets anchored on this perspective. These are: that the society and social response to children with disability are the main source of handicaps to children; that handicap is an attribution of difference by the society in a person with visible impairment; that the disabling reactions of the society actually create the handicaps; that the society creates and blows up a handicap by identifying, labelling impairment; and that the society responds to the labelled by treating the labelled differently.

Another dimension by the author is that without impairment, the society can create a handicap in an individual merely by changing its reaction to the person. The person may be evaluated as being of lesser status and value; as these may have social implications such as being considered incompetent, having low self-concept and being maladjusted adjustment. The author stated further that society creates handicaps by selecting certain physical attributes and classifying these as desirable. Individuals who fall short of these attributes are considered as deviants and are so treated accordingly. Most times, PWDs make themselves more handicapped for personal benefits such as begging to arouse pity or sympathy for financial gains source?.

The thesis statement of this chapter is hinged on the fact that society creates handicaps for PWDs and these handicaps can be reversed by the society to pave way for an inclusive society, ideal for all..

Specific Ways the Society Creates Handicaps for PWDs

1. Attitudes are basic problems of PWDs. These negative attitudes include stereotype, stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. Stereotype refers to false belief about a group of people. People most times stereotype PWDs by assuming that the quality of life they live is poor or that they are unhealthy because of their impairments. Stigma, prejudice and discrimination occurs within the society as a result of negative attitude from people's ideas in relation to disability. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019), most people see disability as personal tragedy; as something that needs to be cured or prevented; as punishment for wrongdoing; or as an indication of lack of ability to behave as expected in the society.
2. Labelling is useful to people who name them because one wonders why do things have name at all. Label is generalized and give an image mirrored from label. The negative side of label is that PWDs are addressed by label instead of their real names, nature and ability. It hides abilities of PWDs and slam a stigma on them. Labelling leads to additional handicaps (Ozoji, 2005).
3. Communication are barriers experienced by PWDs who have hearing, speaking, reading, writing and or understanding, and who use different ways to communicate than normal people. For instance, persons with vision impairment cannot read written messages, use small print materials, no braille among others.



Auditory messages may be inaccessible to people with hearing impairment, including videos that do not include captioning and oral communication.

4. Physical barriers are structural challenges in natural or manmade environment, that prevents or block mobility or access. For example, steps and curbs that block a person with mobility impairment from entering a building or using a sidewalk; mammography equipment that requires a person with mobility impairment to stand; and absence of a weight scale that accommodates wheelchairs or others who have difficulty stepping up.

5. Policy are frequently related to a lack of awareness or enforcement of existing laws and regulations, external icon that require programs and activities be accessible to PWDs. Examples include, denying qualified PWDs the opportunity to participate in or benefit from federal funded programs, services, or other benefits; denying PWDs access to programs, services, benefits or opportunities to participate as a result of physical handicap; and denying accommodation to qualified PWDs so they can perform the basic functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform.

6. Programme barrier limits the effective delivery of a public health or healthcare program for PWDs such as inconvenient scheduling; lack of accessible equipment; insufficient time for medical examination and procedures; little or no communication with patients or participants; and providers attitudes, knowledge, and understanding of PWDs.

7. Social barrier is related to the condition in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work, age, or social determinant of health that can contribute to decreased functioning among PWDs. For instance, PWDs are far less likely to be employed: adult age 18 years and older with disabilities are less likely to have completed secondary school; PWDs are more likely to have poor income compared to normal people; children with disabilities are almost 4 times more likely to experience violence than children without disabilities (Houtenville & Boege, 2018).

8. Transportation are due to a lack of adequate transportation that interferes with a person's ability to be independent and to function in society for example, lack of access to accessible or convenient transportation for PWDs who are not able to drive because of vision or cognitive impairments and public transportation may be unavailable or at inconvenient distances or location.

Society Reversal of Handicaps

If society can be held responsible for creating handicaps, it must also be made to reverse themis and facilitate necessary adjustment of PWDs. The following value changes are required to initiate the reversal.:

1. Society can reverse handicap it created through awareness. The awareness campaign in the society should be about PWDs, their rights, their needs, their potential and contribution. Stakeholders should distribute up-date information on available programs and services; policies on disabilities; PWDs are citizens with



equal rights and obligations as others; portrayal of PWDs in a positive way; campaign should reflect all the aspects of principle of full inclusion.

2. Access to physical environment. Society should initiate measures to remove the barriers to inclusion in the physical environment. The measures should be to develop standard, guidelines and legislature to ensure accessibility to various areas of the society such as housing, buildings, public transport service, and other means of transport, streets and other outdoor environment. Architects, engineers and others who are professionally involved in the design and construction of the physical environment have access to adequate information on disability policy and measures to achieve accessibility. Accessibility requirements should be included in the design and construction of the physical environment from the beginning of the designing process.

3. Access to information and communication. PWDs, their families and advocates should have access to full information on diagnosis, available services and programmes; braille, tape services, large print, assistive technologies, sign language interpreter should be easily accessible; media agencies should make their services accessible.

4. Education. The promotion of the principle of equal primary, secondary, and tertiary educational opportunities PWDs in an inclusive setting. Society ensures that the education of PWDs is an integral part of the educational system and made provisions for people with disability to fit in, such as creating inclusive classrooms, specially designed instruction, adapted curriculum, modified teaching methods, so as to enable PWDs meet the educational standard that is applicable to all. Disability history should be introduced in the curriculum. Learning about the achievement of other people with similar condition, helps to motivate PWDs to pursue their dreams and aspirations relentlessly. There should be provision of comprehensive multi-disciplinary profession in our schools and centres to support PWDs and encourage them.

5. Employment. Society recognizes the principle that PWDs must be empowered to exercise their human rights, particularly in the field of employment. In both rural and urban areas, they must have equal opportunities for productive and gainful employment in the labour market. Laws and regulations in the employment field must not discriminate against PWDs and must not create barriers to their employment.

6. Increase PWDs representations in government and in politics. PWDs experience attitudinal, architectural, and technological barriers during election. Issues of concern include the absence of automatic doors; absence of sign language interpreter or braille signs, and lack of ramps and narrow doorways, making voting equipment inaccessible. PWDs occupying a political position will champion their rights and help facilitate inclusion.

7. Policy making and planning. Disability aspect are included in all relevant policy making and national planning. Society initiate and plain policies for PWDs at the national level and stimulate and support action at state and local levels. The



needs and concerns of PWDs should be incorporated into general development plans and not be treated separately.

8. Legislation. United Nations Human Rights 1993 opined that society have a responsibility to create the legal bases for measures to achieve the objectives of inclusion of PWDs in the society. Legislation embodying the rights and obligations of citizens, should include the rights and obligations of PWDs. This enables PWDs exercise their rights, which include human right, civil, and political rights, on equal level with other citizens. Legislative actions maybe needed to remove barriers that adversely affect the lives of PWDs, discriminatory actions against PWDs will be eliminated and appropriate sanctions should be provided in cases of violation.

9. Self -advocacy and volunteer of people with disability are also vital for change. PWDs need to believe in one self and one's ability and potentials, hence they should not settle for less and must also believe in their rights, communicate with others and form a network and social group among themselves to scale out discrimination. Elemukan 2022 stated that development of advocacy strategy through proper planning using human and material resources, collaboration/partnership of stakeholders is needed to overcome the attitudinal barriers. Team work of the NGO's, parents and organizations of persons with disabilities are important to networking effectively since government lacks the political will for efficiency of purpose. Society should be ready to volunteer to support the course of disability both at local group level, state level, national group level and internationally as part of our advocacy efforts.

10. There is need for regular child care reform for PWDs in Nigeria. Our Out-of-school children, adults and adolescence with disabilities should be harvested, and engage in vocational training, sheltered workshops and rehabilitation activities in created centers, in order to grow the ability and potentials PWDs; and make them functional to cope with rigors of life, and even contribute their quota to society development, since it is the society that denied them the opportunities . Inclusive education is not a soft process it requires commitment of all, society should discard their negative attitudinal barriers to acceptance and participation by all.

Implications of Value Changes on Persons with Disabilities

1. The society is likely to become more cognitively complex, more readily prepared to give a richer impression about PWDs
2. Society's pitfalls in perceiving and evaluating PWDs are minimized to the advantage of PWDs.
3. Many members of the society are more likely to become advocates/volunteers for the PWDs. Talking to a curious bystander, writing about PWDs in the press among others are more likely to be undertaken
4. Society will be more disposed to shun unhelpful, unsubstantiated beliefs about disability and PWDs. Stereotypes and prejudices are held in check (Ozaji, 2005).



Conclusion

It is the society that creates handicap and all of the labelling and subcategorization upon how individual accept or judge persons with disability. The society therefore required proper education on the abilities in disabilities. The article created an awareness on how society created more handicapping condition for persons with disability. The social model of disability emphasized that people may have impairment, they do not have disability. And that the society caused disability rather than individual concerned. The society should dismantle all the barriers and provide access and accommodation for persons with disabilities.

Suggestions

1. The Nigerians should be involved in building and establishing a society that is inclusive
2. All laws and policies concerning persons with disabilities should be adequately implemented
3. Infrastructures and facilities should be built or reconstructed to accommodate individual needs of persons with disabilities.
4. Special materials and equipment needed by persons with special needs should be readily available and accessible.
5. Nigerians should carry out awareness campaign and self-advocacy to eradicate negative attitudinal barriers.

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