



Phenomenological study on the Experiences of Persons Living with Disabilities on Government's Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Transmara West Sub County, Narok County, Kenya

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of persons living with disabilities (PLWDs) in Kenya, a case of Transmara-West sub-county, Narok County on their access to employment. The study was anchored on economic empowerment and social theories of disability. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. Non-probability sampling, specifically, snowball sampling was employed in the study to select three visually impaired and nine physically challenged persons. An interview guide and an observation checklist were used in collecting data. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that PLWDs needed equal opportunities in terms of access to education. It was also established that the implementation of government policies relating to persons living with disabilities was not effectively done as some participants had not benefited from the strategies that were laid down in their favor. The study recommended the implementation of the five percent quota system that is reserved for PLWDs in both public and private sectors, the access of microfinance by PLWDs, the establishment of income-generating business for PLWDs, and the change of negative attitude of both the employers and employees towards PLWDs. It is anticipated that this study could be utilized to provide the government with a better understanding of how to successfully implement employment strategies among the PLWDs.*

Keywords: *Persons Living with Disabilities, Narok, Social Theory, Economic empowerment Theory, Poverty*

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of persons living with disabilities on government's poverty alleviation strategies in Transmara West sub-county, Kenya. According to the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs) are people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory disabilities that, when combined with other barriers, prevent them from fully participating in society on an equal footing with others (UN, 2008). Despite the government strategies on disability issues, PLWDs have limited or no access to employment. Type of job opportunities, inadequate access

to microfinance and discrimination against PLWDs are among the hindrances that limit their access to employment. Despite the efforts of the government, the Church and Non-Governmental Organizations, disability is yet an issue to be looked at. Transmara West sub-county in Narok County, is one of the counties in Kenya that need to be evaluated in terms of disability concerns. As much as there are rules and regulations governing disability issues in the world, persons living with disabilities seem not to be having equal employment opportunities.

As compared to the country's overall employment rate of 73.8%, Kenya's PLWD employment rate is only about 1%

(Ebuenyi, 2019). In accordance with the integrated development plan for Narok County (2018), self-employment is the main form of employment accounting for 60% and above. This means that poor people, including PLWDs, who have no source of income or have no starting capital, are struggling to survive. This study sought to explore on the experiences of PLWDs on their access to employment.

2. Literature Review

According to the World Bank, persons with disabilities are more likely to suffer from negative socioeconomic consequences, such as a lack of education, poor health, lower employment, and higher poverty rates (World Bank, 2020). According to the World Bank (2021), disability raises the risk of poverty by limiting employment and educational prospects, lowering wages, and raising the cost of living. According to the UN (2011) report, the biggest problem facing people with disabilities (PLWDs) around the world is not their particular impairment but rather their unequal access to resources like education, employment, health care, and social and legal support systems, which results in a disproportionately high poverty rate.

PLWDs are the most vulnerable and are excluded from certain plans of development. They are frequently the first to die when sanitary and food conditions deteriorate, fail to go to the hospital because transportation is unaffordable, and are the last to find work when jobs are limited and the last in a group of siblings to be taken to school (Ingstad and Eide, 2011). In order to avoid this, they must be brought back into the society through international cooperation, in a spirit of justice, equity, solidarity and respect with the aid of all the stakeholders.

According to KNSPD (2008), only 25% of PLWDs work in a family business whereas 33% do not work. This has increased levels of poverty among the challenged persons who have no option other than to rely on their families and sometimes well-wishers for their daily bread. As compared to the country's overall employment rate of 73.8%, Kenya's PLWD employment rate is only about 1% (Ebuenyi, 2019). In accordance with the integrated development plan for Narok County (2018), self-employment is the main form of employment accounting for 60% and above. This means that poor people including PLWDs, who have no source of income or have no starting capital, are struggling to survive.

The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE, 2012) indicates that employment can be explained well by human capital theory, which is a theory of earnings, and which was established by Becker and Mincer whereby earnings are one of the major bases of poverty. It explains the investment choice made by an individual in human capital like training and education and the pattern of an individual's lifetime earnings (ASPE,

2002). Here the main determinant is an individual who is to decide to invest in education and training and his or her lifetime earnings. Through employment, one earns an income that helps him or her to provide for daily necessities including food, clothing, shelter, and even access to medical care.

Difficulties with revealing a disability to co-workers at orientation and induction, irritation and vulnerability at work are all issues that the handicapped confront at work, according to a study on PLWDs inclusion in the workplace in South Africa (Bam & Ronnie, 2020) According to the report, a disability advocate is required to ensure disability fairness throughout the organizations, inclusive recruitment and orientation practices to be employed, encouraging co-workers to support PLWDs within organizations and ensure active involvement of PLWDs in shaping on-boarding processes within organizations. This in turn will create a diverse workforce in the country which can be emulated by other countries.

The United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK, 2020), analysed some of the experiences of PLWDs and found out that PLWDs needed encouragement and support. One of the members of UDPK from Meru County stated that “without basic business skills, without necessary support and business knowledge, it is challenging to run a business (one of the UDPK members from Meru County, 2020). After training and employing the skills, the business improved in terms of revenue and personnel morale” Another UDPK member from Laikipia County expressed “I had to speak up. From these experiences, PLWDs need to be supported in other counties and sub-counties, especially Transmara West, to stand out and defend themselves. The current study addressed this gap by recommending the provision of training skills like vocational, farming and business.

A survey carried out by Handicap International in Burundi in 2012 revealed that out of the total Burundian population, 15%-20% are persons living with disabilities and only 2% are employed in different companies (Manishatse, 2019). This indicates that, to the majority of them, employment is not a source of income meaning that they might be lacking basic needs, thereby indicating high unemployment rates.

Narok County is well known for Maasai Mara National Park. This is a very good opportunity for the inhabitants of the county to get jobs in the national park. Among other sources of employment include Transmara Sugar Company, Maasai Cultural bead and attire-making, buying and selling livestock, farming (wheat, maize, potatoes) and small retail businesses. Amidst these potential sources, unemployment levels are high whereby 3.8% in Narok North, 3.4% in Narok South and 2.8% in Transmara (County Government of Narok, 2018). With these strategies, unemployment still exists. The researcher's goal with this study was to get greater insight into the PLWDs' encounters in their strife to access

employment and engage in income-generating activities in self-employment.

In Kirimari Ward, Embu County, a cross-sectional descriptive study was done on the impact of strategies on the empowerment of PLWDs. The study's goals were to determine the impact of inclusive education, equitable employment, and social protection on the empowerment of people with disabilities. Family support, equitable employment, social protection, and inclusive education all have a significant impact on PLWDs empowerment, according to the research. The study recommended that inclusive society and employment opportunities are to be promoted and that vocational guidance to PLWDs should be provided to ease the transition of PLWDs from education and training to work-life (Njue and Mburugu, 2018).

These are very important recommendations that need to be considered. An inclusive society would remove societal barriers that hinder PLWDs from accessing the key services and that those hinder them from participating in community activities. This might help them to raise their self-image, self-esteem, and self-acceptance. As far as the promotion of inclusive society and employment opportunities are concerned, the current study ensured that an emphasis was put on removing societal barriers and that PLWDs' rights regarding employment were to be realized. This could be done through synthesizing communities.

People with high unemployment are thought to live shorter lives and have more disabilities than those with lower unemployment (Ladtka and Ladtka, 2016). This suggests that there is a link between unemployment and disability. The disabled are thought to be unable to find work in many industries. Yes, they may qualify, but when people see them, they instinctively assume they are unable to work, and as a result, they become unemployed. Economically, the person gets deprived and becomes poor because he/she has no source of income, unless the person is creative or innovative.

Similarly, an exploratory study on employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Nairobi County, Kenya, were discovered to be exceedingly limited. This is due to a lack of job-related information, negative attitudes, a physically inaccessible environment, low educational accomplishment, and ineffective labour laws (Opoku et.al, 2016). Because of the scarcity of work prospects for PLWDs in Kenya, poverty reduction among people with disabilities is likely to be difficult. It was then suggested that putting in place efficient procedures to remove roadblocks that hinder PLWDs from accessing employment should be ensured. Same with Transmara sub-county, PLWDs might be having the same challenge of unemployment, but it is yet to be revealed upon the completion of this study.

In Kenya's Nairobi County, a descriptive research was conducted on the experiences of people with disabilities in

accessing employment. It was revealed that majority of PLWDs (87.4%) were denied employment because of their condition (Maina, 2016). One should not be denied a job because he or she is disabled. This brings up another point that employers have a negative attitude towards the disabled which in turn accelerates the level of poverty among PLWDs. This, therefore, need to be looked at and the right to work to be accorded to the disabled people as to other people. The current study addressed this gap by recommending that the five percent that is reserved for PLWDs in both private and public sectors to be implemented and that the society need to change the negative attitudes towards the PLWDs.

2.1 Study Theories

In this study, two theories were used. Economic empowerment theory and social theory of disability. Economic empowerment theory refers to disadvantaged women and men's ability to engage in, contribute to, and benefit from growth processes on terms that value their contributions, respect their dignity, and allow them to negotiate a more equitable allocation of growth gains (Indarti, 2019). It is a theory that gives power to PLWDs to be independent by having some income-generating projects or by being employed.

It is a means through which PLWDs can feed themselves and reduce poverty. It is a process that provides PLWDs with the opportunities, knowledge, and skills they need to increase their capacity to determine their own future and fully participate in society (Tsengu et.al , 2021).

Economic empowerment is a critical component in enabling PLWDs' independence and engagement in society. It can be accomplished through actively participating in economic, social, and political life, as well as having access to jobs, assistance, and basic rights such as education, health care, and housing, all of which help PLWDs integrate into society (UN, 2013).

Social theory of disability points out that people are disabled because of societal barriers and that society is the main cause of peoples' disabilities. the oppression, exclusion and discrimination people living with disabilities face is as a result of how the society is organized (Goering, 2015). The moment the barriers are removed, then the PLWDs and others can strive towards becoming self-reliant.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative research approach, phenomenology in which participants' lived experiences were explored (Selvam, 2017). Phenomenology involves

obtaining and analysing non-numerical data in order to understand ideas, viewpoints, or experiences. It is also used to get in-depth understanding of a situation (Bhandari, 2020). It focuses on a small sample size, examines in-depth the opinions and experiences of the participants while also distilling those experiences into textual data.

The participants had the opportunity to have their stories verified by themselves through the use of phenomenological investigation. Through the act of interviewing, phenomenological inquiry turns the study's participants into co-researchers and co-designers (Rudestam and Newton, 2001). Phenomenology emphasizes the study of conscious experiences like human judgement, perceptions, and actions as a way of understanding the reality on the ground (Mauldin, 2021). It was relevant in this study because the goal was to learn about PLWDs' experiences with the issue under investigation. This design was used in the study because it dug out the issues in a deeper way, the participants had the opportunity to freely express themselves, and new thoughts and individual views were discovered (Selvam, 2017).

Sampling is the process of picking units from the accessible population, such as individuals and organizations, to fairly generalize results to the target population (Orodho, 2009). It is the process of choosing a representative sample of a population in order to ascertain its dimensions and features, as opposed to sampling methodology, which is the process of choosing sample units (Kumar, 2011). Non-probability sampling, specifically snowball sampling, was used in the study to recruit 12 participants. Snowball sampling occurs when the study's early participants recruit future volunteers among their friends (Selvam, 2017). That is, using a participant to lead to the next subject, and the next subject leading to the next till saturation is attained. When a sampling frame is not available, this approach is employed (Selvam, 2017). It is appropriate for this study since the persons living with disabilities in the three wards are dispersed and difficult to contact.

3.3 Description of Research Instruments

As the main methods for gathering data for this study, the researcher employed an interview schedule and an observation plan. An interview guide is a set of organized questions designed to help interviewers, researchers, and investigators acquire data on a certain subject (Luenendok, 2019). It is one method of eliciting information about a group's mind-set and beliefs. The researcher gathered information from PLWDs using the semi-structured interviews. An observation schedule is a form that is prepared prior to data collection and specifies the behaviour and situational variables that would be observed and recorded during the interview (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher used the observation schedule and

the observation sheets were filled out during and after the completion of each interview.

3.4 Validity

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data represents the phenomenon under study. A pilot study is a test of a research instrument on a small group of people before it is used in a larger study (Wright, 2018). Its goal is to assess the study's feasibility so that the study design can be improved prior to the actual study's execution and the chances of success are increased. After creating the interview guide for this study, it was pilot tested on five PLWDs who were not among the participants of the actual study in Transmara West Sub-County. They were interviewed as per the study's sub-questions. The research instrument was then validated before the real study by taking into account their opinions.

3.5 Reliability

According to studies, qualitative researchers need to foster confidence in the study's findings (Creswell, 2013). The researcher was able to boost reader confidence in the accuracy of the findings by using the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability strategies.

In order to address creditability, the study's planned sample of participants, as mentioned in the demographic table, was gathered to provide perspectives and experiences. All fieldwork interviews were transferable immediately following the completion of the interview procedure. Reflexivity and confirmability allowed for a clear sense of self-awareness during the data gathering and outcomes synthesis. The 12 participants can read an autobiographical researcher sketch, which is intended to test confirmability in particular. The data findings were gathered independently to remove the chance of different assessments, avoiding the investigation of inter and intra code dependability. Because the questions were open-ended and topic-specific, there was little room for error in the data analysis caused by unexpected or unnecessary responses during the interview sessions.

4. Results and Discussion

The study investigated the experiences of PLWDs on governments' poverty alleviation strategies. The responses of PLWDs are presented and discussed.

4.1 Demographic details of the participants

The number of both male and female participants was the same, 6 males and 6 females. Out of the twelve

participants, nine of them had physical disabilities while three were visually impaired. The KNBS (2020), statistics which indicated that people with mobility difficulties were more (42%) than other types of disabilities. Four participants were between 18 and 35 years, five were between the age of 36 and 45 while three were between 46 and 55 years.

Regarding employment status, out of the twelve participants, eight of them were unemployed, three were self-employed whereas one had formal employment as shown in table 1. Since employment is very important in meeting one's basic needs, it goes without saying that majority of the PLWDs relied on charity or merely struggled to meet their daily needs.

Table 1: Demographic information of study participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Marital status	Level of education	Type of disability	Religion	Employment status
P1	M	55	Married	Degree	Visual	Christian	Formal
P2	F	55	Married	Secondary	Physical	Christian	Self-employed
P3	M	45	Single	Certificate	Physical	Christian	Self-employed
P4	M	35	Married	Secondary	Physical	Others	None
P5	F	37	Married	Primary	Physical	Christian	None
P6	M	28	Divorced	Primary	Visual	Christian	None
P7	F	36	Single	None	Physical	Christian	None
P8	F	45	Married	None	Physical	Christian	None
P9	F	29	Single	Primary	Physical	Christian	Self-employed
P10	F	47	Single	None	Visual	Others	None
P11	M	30	Married	None	Physical	Christian	None
P12	M	28	Married	None	Physical	Christian	None

N=12

All participants acknowledged that type of job opportunities, lack of access to microfinance and negative attitudes of employees and employers are the main blocks to their limited employment opportunities. The limited job opportunities also resulted from their low levels of

education as majority of them had low education levels. The common themes and evidences from the participants' responses with regard to their access to employment are shown in table 2

Table 2: Common themes and evidence from participants' responses on access to employment

Common themes	Participants' responses
Job opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving a physically challenged person an opportunity to be digging in the farm, is not appropriate... let the employers weigh what PLWDs can manage and what they cannot. • I struggled. There is tough competition between the disabled and non-disabled. The employers prefer those without disabilities. • PLWDs are given small, unworthy jobs which cannot sustain a person. Those who are qualified be given the opportunity of the five percent system to work like others. • People look at our disability not our capability. • To be disabled does not mean somebody is unable; laws/policies must be adhered to in order to give people living with disabilities equal opportunities.
Employer and employee attitudes towards PLWDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nobody wanted to associate with me. Others would be taken for training, given allowances except me because of my disability • The employer is not human. He has shameful verbal abuses, makes me to work for long hours than agreed, calls me terrible names because of disability. • My new employer fired me because of my disability. • The worst thing is the attitude people have towards people living with disabilities. They think that we cannot do anything
Access to microfinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get a loan as a PLWD is not easy. I applied for a loan but the questions I was asked and the conditions I was given because of my disability, put me off. • If I could be given capital or something to top up my business... If PLWDs can be funded to start small business, it will be of benefit to us and our families. • Not that all people living with disabilities have no ability for business, NO! It is only that we have no capital. • Majority of the PLWDs are suffering not because of their disability, but because of the government not being considerate. Money given out for PLWDs, does not reach us. • If we PLWDs could have access to micro finance, we could have employed ourselves; now we depend on others. • If non-governmental organizations could help us, the government and the Church to start small businesses.

4.2 Theme 1: Job opportunities/Employment of PLWDs

The participants stated that they had limited chances of employment opportunities in either public or private sectors. Among the mentioned reasons were lack of law implementation. This rhymes with Mueke's study (2014) which stated that the laws are not the only constraints that prevent PLWDs from accessing employment, but also a lack of suitable employment and insufficient social and interpersonal skills, relationships, or networks.

A participant, P1 stated that:

Giving a physically challenged person an opportunity to be digging in the farm, is not appropriate. Given a certain piece of work that a disabled person cannot manage is simply disqualifying the person in a polite way. If there

are vacancies, let the employers weigh what PLWDs can manage and what they cannot.

P8 indicated that:

Despite the fact that not all PWDs have the knowledge and skills required in different fields, PLWDs are not given their due. To have gotten a job, I struggled. There is tough competition between the disabled and non-disabled. Often employers prefer those without disabilities.

Another strategy that the government has laid down to raise the living standards of PLWDs is the allocation of the five percent reservation for PLWDs in elective and appointive bodies (Constitution of Kenya, 2010, article 54 (2)). The experiences shared implied that the five percent reserved for them is not implemented. This is in line with Opoku et al (2016) study which showed that the five

percent quota system as a strategy has not been implemented. Similarly, Kabare (2018) (Kabare, 2018) study reinforced this finding by revealing that the difficulties are attributed to inadequate government enforcement mechanisms and the lack of unbiased consideration for PLWDs in the public and commercial sectors when it comes to employment chances.

In another example P7 stated the following:

PLWDs are given small, unworthy jobs which cannot sustain a person. Let those who are qualified be given the opportunity of the five percent system to work like others.

A participant, P4 said:

Though most organizations encourage people living with disabilities to apply for jobs, it is not easy for a disabled person to get employment. People look at our disability not our capability. It is better for persons living with disabilities to be given the priority when employment opportunities arise. With this, they stand at a better position to sustain themselves and stop depending on their family members.

In addition, P8 stated that:

To be disabled does not mean somebody is unable. If only poverty is to be minimized, then, the laws/policies must be adhered to thus giving people living with disabilities equal opportunities.

The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003 summarizes the aforementioned conclusion by stating that all employment opportunities, including hiring, salaries, accommodations, pensions, training, and promotion, should be free of discrimination for both public and private employers, and that both should implement the five percent hiring quota for PLWDs.

4.3 Theme 2: Employer attitude towards PLWDs

Another concern regarding participants' employment experiences is the negative attitude from both the employers and employees. The participants acknowledged that the treatment they received was not healthy. Majority experienced rejection, stigma, and stereotyping. This, to a certain extent, discouraged them from seeking the services they needed. They had no sense of belonging, which made some of them leave their places of work. Not because they wanted to, but because the environment did not favour them.

The participants stated that they are discriminated against. Despite the government's laid down strategy that recognizes the right of PLWDs to employment, it seemed that the respondents were not satisfied with the way they were treated. This is corroborated by a study conducted by (Kingiri et al. 2017), which showed that the policies that

acknowledge the right of persons with impairments to employment have a negligible influence. A further finding from the (KIHBS 2015/16) research was that more than half of people with impairments have trouble accessing work opportunities.

P8, a participant said that:

Very few employers and employees treat us well. I was once employed as a receptionist in a school. Nobody wanted to associate with me. Others would be taken for training, and given allowances except me because of my disability.

Participants acknowledged that some employers and employees were not kind; they looked down on them and treated them as unworthy human beings. This results from the negative attitudes and abuses from their fellow employees. This is reinforced by the study of Maina (2016), which discovered that negative jokes from other employees, difficult duties, unpleasant jobs, threats and verbal abuses from employers and employees are some of the barriers to employment for PLWDs. In addition, Trani et al (2020) (Trani et al, 2020) supports the finding as they state that stigma reduces peoples' capabilities and disempowers them, compromises friendships and relationships. As per the experiences shared, good and healthy relationships are important in working places; they foster mutual love and respect, concern, positive regard, and growth in any given organization.

A participant P3 stated that:

I am employed as a shopkeeper. The employer is not human. He has shameful verbal abuses, makes me to work for long hours than agreed, calls me terrible names because of disability.

Another participant P4 said:

My former employer fired me because of my disability. She claimed I could not perform because I am disabled.

In addition, P5 stated that:

The worst thing is the attitude people have towards people living with disabilities. They think that we cannot do anything; ours is to depend on others! If people can change their attitudes, then we are safe. Otherwise, the PLWDs will ever remain in poverty.

Negative attitudes from employers and co-workers, are attributed to PLWDs not getting employed (Maina, 2016). These attitudes contribute to their low self-esteem, and lack of self-acceptance and in the end, they withdraw from the others. PLWDs no longer have the courage to look for jobs or even apply for vacancies in different sectors. The development and maintenance of unfavourable attitudes toward disability are influenced by a number of variables. The UN lists them as: disability ignorance and underrepresentation, social constructions regarding the

causes of disabilities, inaccurate and insensitive media coverage that reinforces unfavourable viewpoints, and legal and policy frameworks that may reinforce unfavourable beliefs about disabilities (UN, 2021). The lives of PLWDs are negatively impacted by all of these.

4.4 Theme 3: Access to microfinance by PLWDs

The experiences of the participants showed that PLWDs are affected by extreme poverty and have limited livelihood opportunities. According to their views, microfinance is supposed to be for poverty reduction, and empowerment of poor and vulnerable people like them but they have no or limited access to the credits. Microfinance Finance Institutions could offer extended services such as financial literacy, customized training for income generation, they said.

Among the factors that the participants listed that prevent them from accessing microfinance are harder credit conditions, lack of capital, negative attitudes, and insufficient training. This is cemented by Sarker (2020) study in Australia which revealed that PLWDs encounter a lot of challenges in accessing microfinance.

P7 added said:

To get a loan as a PLWD is not easy. I applied for a loan but the questions I was asked and the conditions I was given because of my disability, put me off. Where are the representatives of PLWDs in Kenya, in our sub-county?

Another participant, P10 added that:

I started my small business to cater for my need but it is not progressing well. If I could be given capital or something to top up my business, I would be very happy. Now I am struggling to make ends meet with the little profit I make. If PLWDs can be funded to start small businesses, it will be of benefit to us and our families. This will help us to sustain ourselves thus breaking the chain of dependency.

All participants viewed activists as important players in increasing employment opportunities for PLWDs. They commented that activists and other Non-Governmental Organizations are to be the voices of PLWDs. Without these groups, there will always be underrepresentation of PLWDs in different aspects of life, including access to microfinance.

In another example, P12 stated that:

In Transmara, we need a person to talk on our behalf to take our grievances to the government. Not that all people living with disabilities have no ability for business, No! It is only that we have no capital. Even to start chicken rearing or put

up a boutique is a problem. May the government listen to our cry. May those people of goodwill come to our help in terms of funding. This will enable us to come out of poverty and be sustainable”.

A participant, P11 said:

The government is not helping us; it has just put things on paper but there is no implementation. The majority of the people living with disabilities are suffering not because of their disability, but because of the government not being considerate. Money given out for PLWDs, does not reach us. Discrimination towards the disabled has been there and will ever remain in our society.

In addition, P2 stated that:

If we PLWDs could have access to microfinance, we could have employed ourselves; now we depend on others. Not all Non-Governmental Organizations have targeted PLWDs. If I could be given an opportunity to employ myself by starting a small business, I will be a very happy woman. Through this, I will sustain myself and my family. I am appealing to the Church also to boost PLWDs. If I can do business, I believe others are able too. Why can't they try us with some small loans!

It is clear from the findings that, if given the opportunity, PLWDs have the ability to employ themselves, to be entrepreneurs. They expressed that entrepreneurship is very important and beneficial to them. It facilitates the improvement of living standards in families and communities which lead to national development. If given the opportunity for business, they said, they can be independent and sustain themselves.

In another experience, P1 said that:

If PLWDs could have access to microfinance, we will not be depending on others. This will help us to earn our daily bread. If we may be supported by Non-Governmental Organizations, the government, and the Church to start small businesses, we can help ourselves, and others too. We can create jobs in our businesses.

Economic power is very important. It enables one to have a source of income for self, family and others who depend on her or him. Economic empowerment theory therefore is a theory that will help PLWDs to be independent. Through active participation in economic, social, and political life, as well as having access to employment, assistance, and fundamental rights including schooling, medical attention, and shelter, PLWDs can be integrated

into society and be able to contribute to community development. PLWDs struggle in life to make ends meet. It, therefore, calls all stakeholders to collaborate and cooperate in order to help PLWDs come out of poverty. one way of realizing this is by making it easier for PLWDs to access microfinance with the help of the government, NGOs and even the Church.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study revealed that PLWDs' experiences were in relation to type of job opportunities, lack of microfinance and negative attitude of employers and employees. As much as PLWDs have a right to be employed, majority of them had no employment. Some were self-employed while few had formal employment. Among the barriers that hinder their employment accessibility are improper job opportunities, lack of microfinance and negative attitudes of employers and employees. This evident that PLWDs need equal employment opportunities in order to be independent. For this to be successful, there is need for the society to change its negative attitudes towards PLWDs.

5.2 Recommendations

Participants in the study acknowledged that PLWDs have little or no access to employment opportunities. Based on the findings, the study proposed the following research recommendations.

1. Disabled peoples' organizations and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Services need to ensure that the government policies/ laws in favour of PLWDs are implemented. These act as activists for PLWDs. By doing so, the PLWDs will have their rights respected and upheld, they will have a voice in their communities and they will be able to fight for their rights appropriately
2. The private sector needs to facilitate the five percent reserved in public and private employment sectors for PLWDs is implemented. This, according to the findings is a big challenge to the PLWDs. Even for those with qualifications, they find it hard to get jobs. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the private sector to ensure that whatever is allocated to the PLWDs is put in place.
3. The NCPWD should establish income generating business/projects for PLWDs. PLWDs, like those without disabilities have the capacity to do business only that they are lacking the skills and capital. The NCPWD in collaboration with the NGOs should give PLWDs a chance to do business by capacitating them with skills and

capital. This will enable them to be self-reliant thus reducing poverty and dependency syndrome.

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