

CHALLENGES EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES IN SELECTED GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN ZAMBIA FACE AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Person with disability- individuals with permanent physical , sensory or mental impairment hindering the ability to fully and effectively participate in society on equal basis.

Sustainable development- dev that is inclusive and reduces inequalities

-World Report on Disability of 2011, 15% of every country's population are persons with disabilities.

- meaning in a population of 15.4 million people in Zambia, over 2 million people are with disabilities (World Bank, 2014).

- (CSO, 2012) reports, literacy rate for PWD at national level was 58.6 %

- 34.4% never attended school which was higher compared to (20.9 %) for people without disability.

- 90.9% PWD were employed. Out of this, 52.0% were self-employed and 35.2% worked as unpaid family workers

- 83.3% PWD were Agricultural-related jobs.

Legislative measures have been put in place to reduce these inequalities

- The 1991 amended Zambian constitution sought to provide equitable social benefits suitable to the needs of disabled people
- The 1996 National Policy on education which recognizes the rights to education of all people regardless of their capacities was put in place.
- 2010 ratified the United Nations Convention on right of Persons with Disability
- 2012 Domesticated the UNCRPD through the Disability Act
- The ILO convention on vocational rehabilitation and employment (Disabled persons) No. 159 (1983).
- 2015 National Policy on Disability was produced
- 2017 the Seventh National Development plan formulated- points to job creation even for the disabled

Statement of the problem

- To promote equality, dignity and justice, Zambia has stipulated job creation and reduction of extreme poverty among persons with disability as one of its development goals.
- One of the strategies to that is through job creation to empower pwd.
- Past studies indicate that persons with disability are shunted in the public sector as switchboard operators, lecturers or teachers (Mulenga, 2007).
- Given that the realization of a real job in the community gives people a strong sense of identity and other attributes leading to improved quality of life, the experiences of persons with disability in those predetermined careers areas are not known.
- The study sought to assess the challenges persons with disabilities employed in government departments faced and their implications to sustainable development.

purpose of the study

To establish the challenges people with disabilities employed in government departments faced and their effects to sustainable development.

Research objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives :

1. establish the challenges people with disabilities employed in government departments faced in their work
2. examine the effects of the challenges persons with disabilities working in government departments faced on sustainable development.
3. propose interventions to the challenges faced by persons with disabilities employed in government departments in order to achieve sustainable development.

Significance of the study

- the information would enlighten employers on the challenges faced by employees in government departments and devise strategies to reduce discrimination and improve inclusion.

Methodology

Study design: This study adopted an interpretive phenomenological research design.

Population: The population included all the persons with disabilities working in government departments in Lusaka and Kabwe and their employers or supervisors.

Sample and sampling procedures: The sample of 20 respondents was used. The employees with disabilities were selected using snowballing technique. The supervisors were selected using the purposive sampling method. This allowed the researchers to have access to respondents that had the information sought.

Data collection and analysis cont.

Data collection methods and instruments

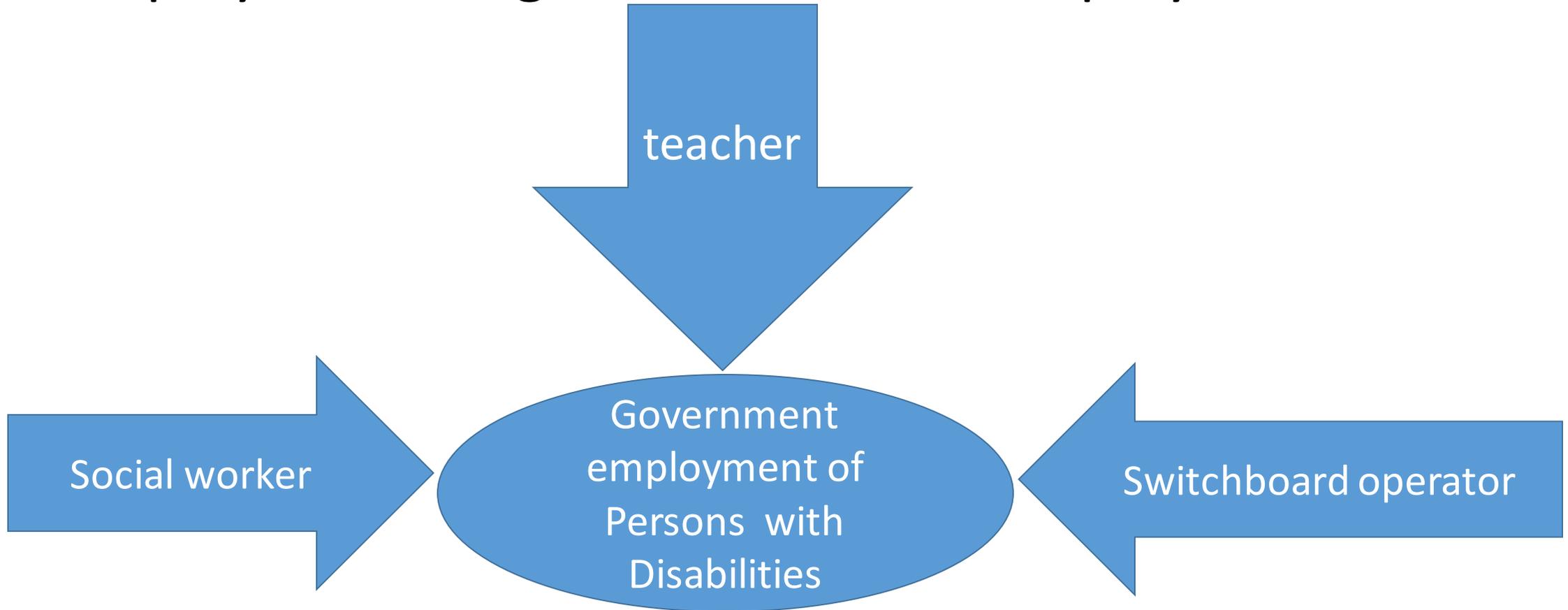
Data was collected using semi structured in-depth interviews using semi structured interview guides. The interviews were conducted one on one by the researchers.

Data analysis

Qualitative data was coded into themes and presented as summaries and narrations

Findings of the study

The study established that persons with disabilities employed in the government were deployed as either:



a) Challenges faced by PWD employed in government departments according to profession

Profession	Challenges
Social worker	Transport is not available for use in their work
	Literature and information in Braille is outdated
	Technology is too fast, no talking software in office for communication and expensive modern gadgets.
	No promotion at work

Challenges cont.

Switchboard operators

Advent of modern technology, government telephone system not working.

No more switchboards in some government and parastatal offices

Mobile phones phasing out relevance of switchboards

Expensive talking gadgets such as ipod and computers

Lack of Transport to access office

No promotion, as deemed loafing and limited career progression in the profession

Poor office accommodation

No salary upgrade

No representation in decision making positions and labour unions

Often their needs are left out during planning and budgeting time.

Challenges cont.

Teachers

No promotions

**(All
disabilities)**

Special needs not taken care of in the labor unions

Un affordable technology gadgets

Lack of socialization with fellow workers

Lack of teaching materials and translators

Language barriers with non-disabled

No suitable infrastructure for the disability

b) Implications of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities employed in government departments

- Humiliation and less motivated
- late for work,
- absenteeism from work
- loss of skill
- disputes at work with superiors.

All these affect productivity negatively

The effects trickled to the family leading to

- Erosion of respect
- Loss of family income
- Children dropping off from school

Eventually living in perpetual poverty

c) Proposed interventions to the challenges

- Increase funding to support units for people with disability
- Government to make other careers and employment accessible.
- Workplace sensitization on inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Increase higher learning facilities and ensure appropriate learning materials are available.
- promote teaching of sign language to all people in order to improve communication

Discussion of results

a) Challenges persons with disability faced

challenges pointed to environmental and attitudinal discrimination with regards to accessibility leading to marginalization. PWD employed in govt lacked support in

i) Transportation

All the respondents had challenges with transport.

The results are in line with what was observed in Tanzania where universal access that calls for the facilitation of movement of PWDs in the country was still a problem (Uromi and Mazagwa, 2014).

ii) Communication

- lack of modern gadgets, able people not understanding sign language, no translators, few transcribed materials in offices contradicts with Standard Rule number 6 of the United Nations on Equalization of Opportunities for persons with disabilities of 1994 which puts an obligation for every state to ensure that it makes documentation readable and accessible to different groups of Persons with disabilities (World Bank Report , 2011).

iii) Promotion

-based on qualifications, but it is hard to for them to upgrade.

For example one said, *'I wanted to be a lawyer but materials in Braille are not available.'*

Murugami and Norma (2011) alluded that choosing a career is a major life activity that enhances the quality of life, offers financial self determination, improves self esteem, gives feelings of contributing to society and offers a general life satisfaction, equally this is important for persons with disabilities

b) Implications of challenges

The results indicated that the marginalization and exclusion negatively affected productivity as it lowered the morale of workers and reduced time of work, leading to disproportionate rates of poverty and deprivation.

Despouy, (1993) also adds that the cost of excluding people with disabilities from taking an active part in community life is high and does not just affect the individual but has to be borne by society, particularly those who take on the burden of care. This exclusion often leads to losses in productivity and human potential.

The findings of the study contradict with the community based rehabilitation approach which works to improve the equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of PWDs. CBR as a strategy provides rehabilitation, poverty reduction, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion (Lemmi et al, 2016).

If sustainable development has to be achieved, the rights to a good life for persons with disabilities should be availed. They should have education, take up jobs like anyone else and earn their living.

In South Africa, Government departments and State bodies have in their line of function, concrete steps to ensure people with disabilities access same fundamental rights like every South African

- the Status of Disabled Persons Office under the Deputy President coordinates the activity.

- The office works with and parallel with various State bodies and departments and organizations in civil society to further the development of a disability friendly environment (DFID, 2000).

- As it is in Zambia, Maunder et al (2004) states that the law may be place and numerous regulations that seek to ensure PWDs are always given due recognition and equal right in accessing public facilities are in place, but how the society perceives them and caters to their needs is cardinal.

On Policy direction- Government to make other careers accessible to pwd

On representation, Uganda has achieved a greater level of political representation at all levels of political administration through the provision of the constitution.

- five seats at parliamentary level are reserved for people with disabilities including women
- at local and all levels of government, there must be at least one representative who has a disability (Ashton,1999).

Promotion- difficulties in upgrading prevented them from getting promotion

lessons can be learnt from Ukraine where the new national law on employment guaranteed that persons with special needs would receive free public vocational education and re-training, and that their employers would receive subsidies. The goal was to employ up to 80 per cent of persons with special needs who had received a vocational education (UN, 2014).

Conclusion

- persons with disabilities employed in the government departments were still excluded.
- The consequences of exclusion of persons with disabilities lead to some costs that result in loss of national Gross domestic product.
- The Sustainable development goal message to “Leave no one behind” could only be realized by making the environment and existing service delivery systems accessible to persons with disabilities regardless of complex nature of disability to enable them participate fully in national development.
- A holistic and people-centered approach that informs, engages, and involves persons with disabilities and their organizations in all aspects of development including employment was required.

Recommendations

1. Awareness programmes at places of work, encourage understanding about persons with disabilities to remove discrimination and bad attitude in the work place thereby facilitating the full participation of the employees.
2. Review of legislative instruments on persons with disability especially on the strategies of implementation in other departments.
3. Review of the national school curriculum so that concerns of persons with disabilities are included through analysis of society needs.

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End of presentation

Thank you