

***THE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN GOVERNMENT
PROGRAMMES: A CASE STUDY OF MITYANA MUNICIPALITY***

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining the participation of people with disabilities in government programmes: a case study of Mityana municipality, the study was directed by the stated objectives. To examine the influence of people with disabilities in government programmes in Mityana Municipality, Central Uganda. To identify the challenges faced by people with disabilities while participating in government programmes in Mityana municipality, Central Uganda. To establish possible measure to mitigate challenges faced by people with disabilities while participating in government programmes in Mityana Municipality, Central Uganda. The study also used the qualitative method as the research design as well as 50 respondents are expected to be involve in this study. In the study it was agreed that there was a negative perception among the Persons with Disabilities as they are not allowed to participate, they had no single value to add to the development process (9(18%) and that Persons with Disabilities cannot participate in development programmes at the same level with others (11(22%). According to the reports highlights different challenges faced mostly by students with disabilities in universities: accessibility barriers, lack of disability friendly materials, attitudinal barriers, financial barriers, university administration and communication barrier, but only a few were discussed here.

Key words: participation, disabilities and government programmes

Background of the study

According to the statistics of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2012), the number of people with disabilities in the world is estimated to be more than 1 billion, which makes up 15% of the entire population, 2-4% of them face serious life problems. and 80% face serious problems in life. They are estimated to be in the southern hemisphere (WHO, 2003). For many people with disabilities, the truth is devastating; only 5-15% of people who need assistive devices and technologies have access to them (World Health Organization, 2012); the rate is as low as 1% (Oromo et al., 2023). Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa, bordered by Sudan to the north, Kenya to the east, Tanzania to the south, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. 34,612,250 in July. 2011. According to the Uganda National Household Survey (2014) 7. 1% of people with disabilities, more than 10% of all disabled people in the world (Ronald & Kazaara, 2023).

Before 1980, people with disabilities in Uganda were not involved in the planning and implementation of government programs designed to assist them. Important services and environments are designed or created without knowledge and understanding of the needs of people with disabilities; services addressed the isolation of persons with disabilities in the community and were seen as the protection of financial aid. However, after the 1980s, a new space was created for the development of people with disabilities (Mercy et al., 2023).

ibid, 2023). Despite all these legal systems, it is seen that disabled people face obstacles in participating in government activities due to different problems such as the lack of employment rights for the disabled and the absence of a disability policy (Godfrey et al. ib., 2023). "People with disabilities have asked Parliament to pass a law that provides for recognition of people with disabilities in their work in the public and private sectors, but people with disabilities lack awareness of disability, ignorance of existing laws, discrimination against people with disabilities. to know their rights (Willies et al., 2022).

For this reason, researchers were reminded to consider the participation levels of people with disabilities in order to solve the problems they face while participating in government activities.

Objective of the study

- 1. To examine the influence of people with disabilities in government programmes in Mityana Municipality, Central Uganda.*
- 2. To identify the challenges faced by people with disabilities while participating in government programmes in Mityana municipality, Central Uganda.*
- 3. To establish possible measure to mitigate challenges faced by people with disabilities while participating in government programmes in Mityana Municipality, Central Uganda.*

Research objective

- 1. What is the influence of people with disabilities in government programmes in Mityana Municipality, Central Uganda?*
- 2. What are the challenges faced by people with disabilities while participating in government programmes in Mityana municipality, Central Uganda?*
- 3. What are the possible measure to mitigate challenges faced by people with disabilities while participating in government programmes in Mityana Municipality, Central Uganda?*

Methodology

Research Design

The study shall use descriptive research design and this design shall help in understanding the participation of people with disabilities in government programmes: A case study of Mityana Municipality. The design shall use both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative shall include use of respondents' responses as themes that it was developed based on the research questions. However, quantitative approaches involved use of descriptive statistics generated with frequency tables, graphs, and Charts.

Target population

The study shall focus on a total of (45) respondents of whom 15 was disabled people, 5 Community members, 10 Municipal Administrators, 5 Employees and 5 Non-Governmental Organizations which included: UNICEF, (International Labour Organisation (LLO) (Community Based Rehabilitation Uganda, (National Union of Disabled Persons Uganda (NUDIPU) (Disabled Women Network and Resource Organisation Uganda) among other.

Research procedure

The researcher shall get an introduction letter from the research coordinator seeking permission to conduct the study after being directed by the supervisor to do so. This letter was presented to the respondents in the study area thus (Mityana Municipality) for permission to conduct the study. Once the permission is granted, the researcher shall have to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents in addition to interviewing them and the next stage after data collected from respondents were analysed.

Data collection instruments

The study used the following data collection methods and tools that used during data collection at the time of the study as the researcher used both primary and secondary data as explained below:

Research Instruments

In-depth Interview guides

In-depth Interview guides was designed and administered to different key informants within the sample frame. They were mainly administered on the disabled and their employers. This instrument was more appropriate in capturing their voices and concerns. The interview guide enabled the researcher to have a dialogue with respondents in a participatory manner in order to reflect their views.

Self-administered questionnaire

Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data where by a set of predetermined questions was designed to collect data from community members who were using both disabled people and community members. Respondents were to allow filling the questionnaire and where possible the researcher helped them in filling the responses in case of those who would provide vital study information but with no formal education. The questionnaire method of data collection was used because of being cheap and that the method collects responses with minimum errors and high level of confidentiality since the respondents were allowed to answer the questions at their convenient time

Data Analysis

Coding

Close-ended questions, pre-coded answers from semi-structured interviews were given a coding frame. For open-ended questions, the coding was carried out after fieldwork. A coding frame based on themes and sub-themes was developed. This was done by looking through each question and answers to particular variables. Data from the semi-structured interviews was entered and analyzed. The percentage number of respondents according to variables that was computed and presented in form of tables and graphs using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Accessibility to Microfinance Services by People with Disabilities in Mityana District, Uganda

According to the Ugandan population survey (2006) 14% of the population of 24.7million Ugandans are people with disabilities. This will be just under 1 million people. Previous studies have shown that people with disabilities face social exclusion and poverty. Microfinance (MF) is one of the Ugandan Government's poverty reduction interventions. Since, MF services are there to help people (especially the poor) to improve their economic activities, People with disabilities are among the poor, and it is thought that access to MF services by people with disabilities is low.

Table 1: Nature of Final Sample

Population	Able-bodied	People with disabilities			MIF Providers	Sub-Total	Percentage
		Deaf	Blind	Physical disability			
Rural							
Male	5	3	1	1	3	13	26
Female	3	4	2	1	2	12	24
Urban							
Male	6	3	2	1	1	15	30
Female	5	2	1	1	1	10	20
Total						50	100

Source: primary data, 2021

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held separately for the blind (3people), those with physical disability (2people) and able-bodied persons (8people). Local sign language interpreters helped in communication between the researchers and the deaf. The researchers took notes and also tape-recorded the proceedings. Before conducting the interviews or FGDs, consent was obtained verbally from respondents after informing them of their rights as participants in the study, and explaining how

the results could be used. Although data analysis was done according to the research objectives, the discussion of findings was based on three themes, i.e., accessibility to MF services, perceptions on accessibility to MF services by people with disabilities, and suggestions on improving this as stated above.

Participation of Youth with Disabilities in Mainstream Secondary Schools' Sports Activities in Uganda

The qualitative method was used and three sources of data were used interviews, records and archives, and workshop proceedings. Interviews were conducted in two mainstream secondary schools in west central Uganda and the National and the District Councils of Sports.

A total of 19 individuals who took part in the study were purposively chosen to represent different impairment groups and their teachers: 12 students consisting of youth with disabilities (2 with hearing impairments, 2 visually and 2 physically impaired), 4 youth without disabilities and 2 sports teachers (half of them from each school) and 3 officers (1 from the National Council of Sports and 2 from District Sports offices).

Challenges People with Disabilities Face in Accessing Health Services

Distance - People with disabilities live ½ -10 kilometers away from the Health Centres, i.e., a walk of 40 minutes - 4 hours to reach the health centre. These distances are too long for many of them to walk and too expensive for them to secure transport. Transport costs are often doubled as they frequently require a helper to accompany them (2 physically impaired people, 1 blind and 3 hearing impaired people who were interviewed needed helpers to travel). It was observed that there were long queues at the health centres, unfriendly medical staff, and difficulty in communicating due to lack of sign language interpreters, lack of wheelchairs so some people with disabilities have to crawl on the dirty floor, and

lack of special toilet facilities. High steps, high treatment beds and lack of ramps present difficulties for visually and physically impaired people.

Challenges Faced by Medical Workers While Providing Health Services to People with Disabilities:

Difficulties with communication were the biggest reported problem and resulted in not knowing the history of the disease, for example from the deaf clients, because of lack of knowledge of sign language. Other difficulties were work overload because of few staff, very small working spaces and insufficient drugs for dispensing.

How people with disabilities deal with the challenges: Apart from one visually impaired respondent who works with the Education department and earns money to pay for transport, medicines and health services, the rest of the people with disabilities who were interviewed did small jobs which are not well paid. Consequently, they could not deal with the challenges of expensive transport and medicine, and depended on local herbs.

Ways of improving accessibility as suggested by health workers:

This centre should be provided with a wheelchair to help people with disabilities when they are very sick” (Mityana, H.C). “A special toilet should be built in the ward for people with disabilities” (Senior Nursing Officer, Health Centre). “Provide an eye specialist to every health centre. It will reduce on the number of blind people” (Mityana, H.C). “Information about the people with disabilities should be established so that they are known and planned for” (Mityana. H.C).

Examine the influence of Perception of disability on the participation of persons with disabilities in government programs

Table 2: Descriptive results on perception in participating of Persons with Disabilities in development programmes in Mityana District

	Frequency	Percentage
Even when Persons with disabilities are allowed to participate, they have no single value to add to the	09	18

<i>development process</i>		
<i>Persons with disabilities can-not participate in government programmes at the same level with others</i>	11	22
<i>Participation of Persons with disabilities in government programmes is a waste of time and money</i>	07	14
<i>Family breakups are responsible for non-participation of Persons with disabilities</i>	03	6
<i>Persons with disabilities have limited decision making due to violence caused in the community</i>	11	22
<i>Persons with disabilities are more susceptible to violence in any given community</i>	09	18
<i>Total</i>	50	100

Source: Primary data, 2021

In the study it was agreed that there is a negative perception among the Persons with Disabilities as they are not allowed to participate, they have no single value to add to the development process (9(18%) and that Persons with Disabilities cannot participate in development programmes at the same level with others (11(22%). This implies that majority community members have negative perception towards Persons with Disabilities in participating in government programs in terms of adding value to the process since it is negatively perceived that given their disability status, they cannot effectively participate at the same level with able persons in the community development process.

In the study it was found out that community members have a negative perception that participation of Persons with Disabilities in development programmes and other related programs like agriculture, politics and education etc. is a waste of time and money (7(14%) it was also agreed that there is a negative perception that Persons with Disabilities are considered slow in executing work. This implies that some community members have a negative perception on Persons with Disabilities that

*involving them in development activities may be a waste of time as they are perceived slow in conducting their activities to participate in community development activities. **Conclusions***

According to the finding above the influence of cultural belief people have on the people with disabilities, these are negative cultural beliefs on persons with disability in the community and this affects their participation in government project mostly youth don't participate in education programs and yet the government have made it possible for people with disabilities to study in a way of improving their lives. Disabilities as a curse to their family and communities and a perspective that disability is as a result of displeasing the gods.

Recommendations

According to the reports highlights different challenges faced mostly by students with disabilities in universities: accessibility barriers, lack of disability friendly materials, attitudinal barriers, financial barriers, university administration and communication barrier, but only a few were discussed here. These studies are connected, in that they mostly present the policy and historical developments of higher education and the reasons for continuing challenges, even in the wake of new policy frameworks. Different solutions are suggested, including a national disability policy framework for higher education. These studies emphasize strongly the complex nature of the environment within which disability occurs.

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