

Community Perception of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Kenya

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Abstract

Kenya as a country has ratified and enacted international and regional conventions, statements and policies in relation to the rights of PWDs. They include: Children's Act 2001; the Disability Act revised, 2006; the 2009 Special Needs Education Policy; the 2010 Constitution of Kenya; and the Vision 2030 Policy Paper. These are very progressive and responsive provisions in promoting and protecting the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities. All these frameworks recognize the importance of inclusion of PWDs in all socio-economic activities; however, the question remains as whether these are recognized and implemented at community levels. This paper is derived from an action research project carried out in Siaya county, Kenya. Action Research is fundamentally qualitative, hence data used derived from mainly focus group discussions with community members, community leadership and the PWDs themselves. The study revealed that owing to negative perceptions of PWDs by community members, due to stigmatization resulting to discrimination and isolation, they are hardly included in community based socio-economic activities *inter alia* of education, employment, decision making.

Keywords

Rights of People with Disabilities,
Community-Based Socio-Economic Activities, Community Perception

1. Introduction

It is estimated that around 785 million (15.6%) of the world's population, live with disabilities; according to World Health Organization (WHO, 2011). Eighty percent (80%) of these people live in the developing countries according to the World Bank Report on Disability Assessment, 2011. In addition, WHO (2018) statistics

show that there are about 1 billion people around the world living with some form of disability, which in many ways limits their full potential to participate in socio-economic activities. In Africa, an estimated 60 to 80 million people are living with disabilities which is about 10% of the general African population, with the percentage increasing to 20 % in poorer regions (WHO, 2018). The growing number of PWDs in Africa is attributed to violence, birth defects, malnutrition, population growth, age, chronic diseases and pollution according to the *Disabled World: towards tomorrow* (2018). Majority of the PWDs are excluded from schools and opportunities to work, resulting in begging as the sole means of survival.

Regionally, surveys conducted in some sub-Saharan African countries, mainly from the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA), indicate that there are high percentages of PWDs. In South Africa, the national Disability prevalence rate is 7.5% and is more prevalent among females compared to males (8.3% and 6.5%, respectively). PWDs increase with age. For example, according to *South Africa Census (2011)*, 53.2% of persons aged 85 years and above reported having disabilities. The summary statistics up to 2011 for PWDs in ESA is as indicated in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Statistics on people with disabilities in selected ESA countries.

Country	% of persons living with	Population	Year
Malawi	3.8	13 million	2008 ^a
Zambia	15	13 million	2010 ^b
Uganda	16	30 million	2009 ^c
Kenya	3.5	40 million	2009 ^d
South	5	52 million	2011 ^e
Botswana	2.9	2 million	2011 ^f

Data from ^aPopulation and Housing Census, ^bPopulation and Housing Census, ^cNational Household Survey, ^dPopulation and Housing Census, ^eGeneral Household Survey, and ^fPopulation and Housing Census.

It is worth noting that in all countries, when segregation is done by gender, 51% are females.

Kenya's population was enumerated at 47.6 million in 2019 with an inter-censal population growth rate of 2.3 percent. This was an increase of about nine million over the 38.6 million enumerated in 2009 (GoK, 2020)

According to the 2019 census, 2.2% (0.9 million people) of Kenyans live with some form of disability. The 2019 census further indicates that 1.9% of men have a disability compared with 2.5% of women (Development Initiatives, 2020). For comparison, the 2009 census reported 3.4% of men and 3.5% of women had a disability; again, when looking at the same age threshold (i.e. adults and children above five years of age), 3.7% of men and 3.9% of women had a disability (Owino, 2020).

According to the census, Kenya had 918,270 people aged 5 years and above

living with a disability. More females than males had disabilities. The common types of disability found in the country during the census were mobility (385,417) and visual impairment (333,520). A total of 9729 persons had some form of albinism (GoK, 2020).

There are more people with disabilities living in rural than urban areas. Analysis of prevalence rates by residence shows 2.6% (0.7 million) of people in rural areas and 1.4% (0.2 million) of people in urban areas have a disability. The 2009 census reports 3.8% of rural populations and 3.1% of urban populations had a disability (Development Initiatives, 2020).

Analysis of disability by domain reveals that mobility is the most commonly reported difficulty, experienced by 0.4 million Kenyans and representing 42% of people with disabilities. The other domains of disability, seeing, hearing, cognition, self-care and communication, are experienced by between 36% and 12% of people with disabilities. Albinism is a condition experienced by 0.02% of Kenya's population (Development Initiatives, 2020).

At the county level, Meru County recorded the highest number of Persons Living with disabilities of 74,625 persons. Other counties with the highest number of PWDs include Kakamega (68,421), Kiambu (62,249), Homa Bay (61,583), Kisumu (56,980) and Nairobi (56,346). While counties like Lamu, Isiolo and Marsabit recorded the smallest number of PWDs. The highest prevalence rates

of disability were recorded in central, eastern and western parts of Kenya, while Counties with the lowest disability prevalence rates are found in the north eastern part of Kenya. The least shares were in Wajir, Garissa and Marsabit counties at 0.6, 0.7 and 0.8 per cent respectively (RoK, 2019).

People with disabilities experience stigma and discrimination which excludes them from economic and social activities and full participation in life. Less informed members of the community may see PWDs as bothersome and a nuisance or slow at learning. Their peers may make them a target of mockery, and may bully them. People with intellectual disabilities, psychosocial disabilities, as well as women and girls, older persons, children and youth with disabilities, are particularly affected and vulnerable to violence. These people, however, require individualized support to promote participation in Community Based Social Economic Activities as well as quality of life. Historically, such people have been discriminated against and excluded from the ordinary lives activities and oftentimes forgotten.

Kenya has made milestones in legal and policy environment which aim at supporting the persons with disabilities (PWDs). This is demonstrated through the inclusion of disability issues in the Kenya Constitution (2010) and enactment of the disability Act (2003) as well as development of the disability policy. As a result, various sectors have developed sector specific policies to inform decisions on how to empower and enhance the welfare of PWDs. However, PWDs still face various forms of exclusion in various socio economic dimensions (Onsomu, Mose, & Munene, 2024).

Siaya County, the study area, enacted Persons with Disability ACT in 2023 to provide for the rights and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities; to achieve equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities; to establish the County Board for Persons with Disabilities; and for connected purposes (Siaya County Persons Living with Disability Bill, 2015).

The last decade has seen improved public awareness of disability in Kenya and Siaya County. However, negative and stereotypical views of disability still persist in many parts of Siaya County. PWDs are still isolated from Participation in Community Based Socio-Economic Activities in the County. This paper shall answer the question; why PWDs are still being excluded from socio-economic activities and full participation in life?

2. The Current State of Public Awareness Regarding Disability

Many Kenyans are aware that there are people in the society who are abled differently with obvious disabilities or handicaps including physical visual, auditory and those who are severely intellectually handicapped. However, whether the society is aware of all the conventions, statements and policies that stipulate the right of PDWs is an issue that needs to be discussed.

Part of this study, from which this paper is derived explored community leadership that included the National Government Administrative officers (NGAO) the clergy, and the PWDS themselves awareness of issues regarding the rights of PWDs, as indicated in different international regional and local conventions, policies and statements. It was found out that many in the community leadership positions had very little knowledge on the rights of PWDs, particularly including them in socio-economic activities like schooling, employment and in decision making. For example, they had scanty knowledge about the recommended percentage of 10% of PWDs to be employed by government and the private sector. They also did not know that 10% and all government tenders should be given to PWDs. Further, it was not clear to these participants that all buildings should be made accessible to all PWDs. The reason why this policy has low enforcement rate by the leadership. This lack of awareness is what has precipitated the stigmatization, discrimination that PWDs were experiencing in the community.

PWDs gave examples of how they were disregarded in the community which was attributed to lack/inadequate awareness of the rights of PWD. In relation to schooling, PWDs seemed to agree that there seemed not to be accepted in schools, and apart from being discriminated against, the other children went as far as being violent towards them, leading to children with disabilities dropping out of school. One PWD expressed sentiments that due to the way she was treated in school, she filed to learn because “*I am stressed every time*” (PWD-FGD-S3).

Discrimination is also experienced in employment regardless of their qualifications. One participant who was visually impaired said,

Private bodies, e.g. private academies could not employ me because I am blind. The management asked me if I can write on the board, and I replied I can never

write on the board. Because I cannot.

One of the rights of PWDs is the right to access all services as enshrines in the 2010 constitution of Kenya. This is an aspect of inclusivity. However, PWDS are of the opinion that they are unable to access various services like other people. Two areas of services that are challenging to access that were mentioned included: were mentioned included access to health and transport services. PWDs complained that they queue for long without any consideration to their disability. At times they are actually ignored, especially when they go for assessment.

In addition, the facilities at the hospital are not disability friendly. Apart from PWDs finding it challenging to access hospital buildings, the beds are not accessible to them.

PWDs are aware that they should easily be able to use public transport regardless of their disabilities. However, this is not the case. PWDS also argued that even when they participate in meetings, they are usually ignored because it is perceived that they don't know anything. The above sentiments by the PWDs point to the fact that there is very little awareness about rights of the PWDs by the community. In fact, one administrative officer qualified it all when she said,

...the community sidelines these people. Words that come from these people if you walk around the community. You will hear somebody abuse somebody [PWD] in our vernacular rabamni (your leg is crooked) and they are [PWDs] hearing.

The forgoing discussion indicates the public level of awareness regarding disability and the rights of PWDs

3. Methodology

This paper is derived from an action research study that was conducted in the six sub-counties of Siaya County of Kenya on "Promoting Awareness of Persons with Disabilities in Education and Community Based Programmes". Action Research is fundamentally qualitative. The paper therefore is based on the reconnaissance stage of action research, a fact finding stage before intervention. Sampling was purposive, for participants who have rich information about PWDs data for this paper was derived mainly from focus group discussions with community members, community leadership (chiefs, sub-chiefs), the clergy and the PWDs themselves.

4. Interpretation of Findings

There are persons with disabilities in all parts of the world and at all levels in every society. At least one billion people, or 15% of the world's population experience some form of disability, and disability prevalence is higher for developing countries, according to the [World Bank Group \(2023\)](#). The number of persons with disabilities in the world is still large and keep growing each time. PWDs like any other citizens as recognized by both international and national policy frameworks have the right to participate in all socio-economic activities, at both national and community levels. Their level of participation remains disturbingly low. Barriers

to full social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities include inaccessible physical environments and transportation, the unavailability of assistive devices and technologies, non-adapted means of communication, gaps in service delivery, and discriminatory prejudice and stigma in society. There are many different types of barriers. Barriers can be visible, invisible, physical, attitudinal, technological, information and communication barriers (World Bank Group, 2023). This emanates from the fact that PWDs are stigmatized, discriminated against, and hence isolated from most socio-economic activities, like schooling, employment, or even community meetings. The question is, why is this the case and why is the society reluctant to include them in their activities?

5. Participation in Community Based Activities

This study found out that there are certain perceptions that other people have of PWDs that perhaps make them be reluctant to include them in community based activities. There is a common perception that PWDs are hostile to other people, particularly those who would like to assist them. A clergy who said had experience with PWDs said, *“My personal experience with PWDs is they are people who do not want much assistance, in other words, they are people who do not want to be sympathized with.”* He narrated how a PWD shouted at him because he had stopped his car to give her a lift since it was late, something he could not understand. This hostility issue was agreed upon by the clergy and community leadership. One chief also added, *“even in the community, they throw words at you”* They argued that they did not understand where the hostility is coming from. In fact, this hostility is sometimes perceived as arrogance. One chief declared that *“...they are very arrogant because some need to be given special treatment.”* With this perception, it would be challenging for other members of the society to include hostile people in their activities. However, a question one would like to ask is why PWDs are hostile to other people. Is it the way they perceive to be treated – stigmatized, discriminated against and isolated?

In fact, PWDs indeed perceive hostility from other members of the society, they said, they *“experience abuse and despise.”* Perhaps this is what triggers hostility from their end. In this regards, one of them said,

“If we leave this place (venue of interview) you will see a woman, even a man in a suit will stop and look at us like we are devils. We are like devils from the bush. Even when people are sitting in a group, when they see you they say where are these ones coming from now. We ourselves are not like human beings to other people...”

With such sentiments, it would be difficult for PWDs to involve themselves in community based socio-economic activities.

There was also a feeling that PWDs are not flexible to accommodate other people's views. One chief said, *they always want to have their way, and if this does not happen, then they feel neglected and become harsh and hostile.* The chief went ahead and asserted, *“you can't tell them know, this cannot happen this way.”*

It therefore seems that an opinion has been formed about PWDs that apart from being harsh and hostile, they are not flexible. It would be very challenging for other people to want to include them in community based activities. There was a consensus in this regard that “*PWDS are not involved by their families and communities in anything.*”

However, it is interesting that as much other people that feel that PWDs are not flexible enough to accommodate other people’s views, PWDs actually feel neglected in these situations. They feel that this neglect emanates from how others perceive them, as people who know nothing. One of them said,

In meetings PWDS are not given opportunities to talk. Others talk and we don’t. So they just know that we are sleeping and there is nothing that we know.

By using the term “sleeping” perhaps meant that other people think that PWDs do not know what is going on around them in the community

They went ahead as argued that they through other people think that they do not seem to know anything, “*we know everything which we are supposed to help in the community.*”

6. Participation in the Area of Employment

Employment of PWDS is another area where they seem to be greatly discriminated against; hence their participation is very minimal. Community leadership did not seem to know that the constitution stipulates that 30 % of employees in any sector should be reserved for PWDS, youth and women. Though most PWDs were aware of this constitutional stipulation, they seemed helpless. One of them complained and said; “*the government itself does not adhere to the rule of 10%*” This emphasized that if the government contravenes this rule, who then has the obligation to adhere to it? How can then the government even enforce this rule?

One thing that was clear was that many PWDs do not seem to apply for jobs when advertised. Various reasons were cited as to why this is the case: they don’t get information; they are not qualified; or simply discriminated against because of their situation. When they were challenged that PWDS simply do not apply for jobs when advertised, resulting to unemployment, one of them retorted

OK. I want to tell you this. That is very wrong they PWDS said that it was difficult for them to know when a job has been advertised. Number one, when there are those opportunities do we know? That is the question that those people who are saying that should be able to answer.

He went on and argued that there was a problem of accessing information in relation to job advertisements. And even if they get hey information, it is usually very late -

If you can get information about job opportunity today and the deadline is today at 5 pm, and the announcement was even one month ago, so there is a problem of accession information by PWDS. ...because we don’t get it at appropriate time.

The question that remained unanswered is, why PWDs access information don’t. They had some answers to this question. One who had hearing impairment,

and therefore with no speech, through a sign language interpreter said that because they are in a silent world, they would need translators all the time to get information.

On the question of qualifications, both the community leadership and PWDs themselves said that they are not simply qualified for most of the jobs. PWDs said that " ... a job where degree is required and many of us here at grass root level we do not have degrees..." This means that they will definitely miss out on such job opportunities which are the majority.

PWDs are unable to participate in the employment arena because of their situation, depending on their types of disability. As a result, they are discriminated against. One of them, a qualified trained teacher, but was visually impaired stated that,

Private bodies, e.g. private academies could not employ me because I am blind. The management asked me if I can write on the board, and I replied I can never write on the board. Because I cannot write on the board, I was not employed

One other who was physically impaired complained bitterly how he applied for a painting job at an institution and he was asked how he was going to climb ladders to paint the walls

If there is a project at the grassroots, PWDs are set aside. Even sweeping projects in markets, PWDs, even if you look for it, you will not get it. They say what will PWDs do?

It was also clear the PWDs though sometimes not qualified for certain jobs are still discriminated against even for jobs that do not need any particular qualifications, or are learnt as they grow up through family members. When asked whether they are included in community projects, one of them, sounding desperate stated, "Ahhh! That is a dream" and another continued and said,

[even] If there is a project at grass root level, PWDs are set aside. Even a sweeping project at markets, PWDs, even if you look for it you will not get it. They will say, what can a PWD do ... they have isolated us that we can't.

They argued that all this is because other people think that they do not know how to work. This therefore would make it difficult to get others including them in in the arena of employment as a community based activity. However, the community leadership argued that they include PWDs in community activities. One chief said, "I have them in my groups, youth groups and women groups, and they really participate." And one clergy also said that they have them in church, a place where they find solace and hope. However, one PWD narrated his experience when he became disabled at grade seven. He said, "when I got s disability I was despised. Even in church we are disabled" But if community leadership argue that there is inclusion of PWDs in community activities, then why do they strongly feel that they are isolated and do not feel this inclusion? It could be argued that perhaps the percentage of inclusion is very minimal. One area that PWDs agreed with leadership is that one of them being included the Board of Management (BOM) of Schools, which seems to be for very few of them.

7. Participation in Education/Schooling

As much as the right to education for every child is a well-known right, participation in formal schooling as community activity is one area that is riddled with a myriad of challenges for PWDs. The reasons are varied for this issue, But the ones that were reiterated by both the community leadership and the PWDs themselves, were the cost of education, and discrimination and mistreatment of Special needs learners by other learners and teachers at the school.

Both the community leadership and PWDs themselves agreed that though they are aware if the right to education for all children regardless of their situation, the cost of education particularly for special children is prohibitive. It was agreed that taking special needs children is costly for most parents. It was summarized as thus,

Majority [of special needs children] do not go to school. These people need special schools. Special schools are boarding schools. So we realize that the local people with very little income cannot afford to pay for the students...

To emphasize how costly, it is to take a special child to school, the specific amount of money for was mentioned—“...to take a child to a special school is costly. Primary [school] is fifteen thousand. Fifteen thousand, where will a PWDs get it from.”

In addition, distance to schools for these children is another reason why they are not taken to schools. It was realized that,

It is very difficult for these people [parents] to take this [special needs] child to school and bring him back and has other children to take care of... and distance also is a very big challenge ... most of these children are just at home, they cannot be taken to school

It was also agreed that most parents to SNE children do not take them to school because their children are discriminated against, stigmatized and isolated. In fact, some are mistreated and bullied in schools. One disheartening experience was narrated of a parent who refused to take his child who could hear but unable to speak to a public school. The parent said, *when the child goes to school, other children beat him up, they beat, they chase him away, they undress him and throw them [clothes] away, and the child goes back home naked.* One PWD who as physically handicapped also narrated her experience in school that made her drop out of school. She said,

... I would not have learnt because the school I was taken to; I was one PWD. When you walk, other children walk behind you [imitating] how I walk. If I wear shoes, the shoes are snatched [and they say] and this disabled person is wearing shoes for what? If you have one eye, other children close one eye in imitation. Now they are blind. ...if a child with a disability is in school. That child is like a cartoon for others to play with. We cannot learn properly

As all these were happening there was no protection from teachers.—“*And the teachers in school do not reprimand the other children*” All these seem to be too overwhelming to learners with disabilities resulting to them dropping out of school.

8. Discussion

The population of people with one or another type of disability is large. The rate of unemployment for people with disabilities who would like to work is several times higher than the unemployment average nationwide, and the percentage of people who live below the poverty line is two to three times greater for people with a disability that interferes with their ability to work than for the total working population. These circumstances not only represent a severe problem for many people with disabilities, but they also create a significant economic burden for the nation. Most of the previous research on how to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities has tried to find ways to use technology—especially computer and communication technologies—to mitigate the limiting effects of disabilities in the workplace and elsewhere (National Research Council, 1995). When the whole world is striving towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in all walks of life, they are still among the vulnerable group who are at risk of social exclusion (Sarkar & Parween, 2021). The meaningful participation in societal activities is hindered by marginalization at an individual level leading to unemployment and thus poverty. Disability, social exclusion and poverty are inextricably associated that despite poverty alleviation programmes, disability reforms, advocacy and disability acts, these marginalized group of disabled individuals still remain as victims. The government of Kenya is committed to the protection and provision of equal opportunities to Persons with special needs and disabilities since 1964 (Runo, Mugo, & Karugu, 2013) (East African Review 46-1/2012 citation). This is further seen through the fact that the Government of Kenya, United Kingdom and International Disability Alliance co-hosted the Global Disability Summit in 2018. The aim of the Summit was to transform the lives of Persons with Disabilities by raising global attention and focus on a hugely neglected area, mobilizing new global and national commitments to meet and implement the ambition set out in the global goals and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this front, there is a need for Kenya to explore ways in which specific jobs might be designed or redesigned to accommodate people with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities are excluded, discriminated, alienated or persecuted in different ways. These have their roots in the exclusion of people over centuries on the basis of such characteristics as ethnicity, gender, identity, disability or other intrinsic features of people (Das 2009). For example, seeing people only in terms of their impairments and the notion of the “typical worker” can result in discriminatory behaviour (Harma et al., 2013; Foster & Wass, 2013). These mental models have enabled not only exclusion, but also discrimination, alienation and persecution in different ways (Balibar, 2005; Simpson, 2011). Kenya has made milestones in legal and policy environment which aim at supporting the persons with disabilities (PWDs). This is demonstrated through the inclusion of disability issues in the Kenya Constitution (2010) and enactment of the disability Act (2003) as well as development of the disability policy. As a result, various sectors have developed

sector specific policies to inform decisions on how to empower and enhance the welfare of PWDs. However, PWDs still face various forms of exclusion in various socio economic dimensions (Onsomu, Mose, & Munene, 2024).

There seems to be an assumption that with both the national and international legislation, and, policies about inclusion of PWDs in all community socio-economic activities. But this does not seem to be the case. The study findings show that the community is largely reluctant to include PWDs in socio-economic activities. At a community level, exclusion is driven through perceptions of understanding and knowledge of disabled people, discrimination and bullying, accessibility and transport, education and employment. For example, people with mental health problems are often excluded because of stigma and discrimination, and low expectations of what they can achieve (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004).

Personal and social relationships also drive exclusion. Some disabled people need support from family or support workers to participate in the community, particularly given some of the structural and socio-economic barriers to inclusion. This support can be hindered by limited resources, as well as families' concerns over discrimination or bullying (Anaby et al 2013; Kramer et al., 2014).

Social exclusion affects people's personal wellbeing and participation in society in multiple ways. These include access to the social networks within communities that support integration and connection with others, access to community services and amenities that support a fulfilling life, and the social and financial rewards that accompany employment and education.

For disabled people, the challenge of social exclusion is accentuated by the attitudes and behaviours that undermine their capacity to make their full contribution to New Zealand communities. For decades, until the 1980s and 1990s, disabled people were often hidden away in large institutions. Now, through the attitudes and behaviours of people, and the norms and structures of society at large, disabled people are often excluded from buildings, homes, schools, businesses, sports, community groups and an integrated, included life (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).

PWDS are largely stigmatized, discriminated against, and mostly isolated from most socio-economic activities, like schooling, employment, or even community meetings. Low incomes, unemployment, lack of education, limited access to transport, poorer physical and mental health, and discrimination are key drivers of exclusion for persons with disabilities. For this discussion, emphasis will be on what the Kenyan legislation, Vision 2030 stipulate in relation to inclusion of PWDs in socio-economic activities and the findings of the study. In addition, both national and international policy papers on PWDs and learners with disabilities will be included.

The constitution of Kenya, which is the supreme law, specifies that persons with disabilities should be treated with dignity and respect, and to be addressed and referred to in a manner that is not demeaning; to access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities and are integrated into society to the

extent compatible with interests of the person. However, findings for this study were contrary to the stipulation of the supreme law. Generally, being discriminated against, stigmatized and isolated implies that PWDs are not being treated with the dignity and respect they deserve; it is in fact very demeaning.

The study found that contrary to the constitution of Kenya, two reasons were cited as to why children with special needs/disabilities are unable to access education institutions.

First, the cost of special schools is exorbitant and many parents with special children cannot afford. Secondly, though schools are supposed to admit all children, it seems that special needs children are not really welcome in regular schools.

It is understood that the children who were not attending school were mainly those with communication, cognitive, self-care and mobility disabilities (Momoh 2023). The ones that get into schools are not only discriminated against, but they are also bullied (unprovoked, negative physical or psychological actions perpetrated repeatedly over time between bully/ies and victims) and vilified to the extent that they drop out of school.

This treatment also discourages parents of learners with disabilities from taking them to school. This is in line with the study by Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu and King (2008) that “Bullying can lead to fear of school, absenteeism, and stunted academic progress, which in turn are precursors to dropping out of school”.

Kenya Vision 2030 in its education and training section stipulates that the government will develop key programmes for learners with special needs. And raise funding to enable PWDs institutions to support their activities. The government will create centres of specialization for each of the vision 2030 economic growth sector. However, the study found out that parents are unable to take their special children to school due to the high cost. This therefore may imply that these schools are inadequately funded by the government a special child one of the reasons why parents of children with special needs are unable to get their children into schools is the prohibitive cost. This implies that the government is yet to adequately fund special schools to support their activities.

The vision 2030 for gender, youth and vulnerable groups is gender equity, improved livelihoods for vulnerable groups, and responsible, globally competitive prosperous youth. The goal for 2012 is to increase opportunities all around for the disadvantaged groups. Specific strategies will involve; improving access of all disadvantaged groups (business opportunities, health and education service, housing and justice,); and, minimizing vulnerabilities thorough prohibition of retrogressive practices and by up scaling training for people with disabilities and special needs.

The government of Kenya through its policy of FPE 2003 recognized that SNE activities and services were poorly coordinated and many learners were not accessing education. Session paper number 1 of 2005 emphasizes the need to develop a comprehensive special needs education policy that covers all aspects and

levels of education. These were all stipulated in the Special Needs Education policy (2018). However, the study findings reveal that special needs learners are still not accessing education due to discrimination, stigmatization and isolation, in addition, prohibitive SNE schools' costs is a big contributory factor

Further, Disabilities Act 2003 focusses on empowering persons with disabilities and equalization of opportunities by ensuring to the maximum extent possible that PWDs obtain education and employment and participate fully in sporting, recreational and cultural activities. The study however found that PWDs are not included in most socio-economic activities. This therefore implies that it would be very difficult for other members of the community to include them in social activities like sporting, recreational and cultural activities as stipulated in the Disability Act. Though there is also an argument that PWDs could exhibit hostility towards other people in the community even when they offer support to them, it's not clear why the behavior. However, it can be deduced that perhaps this emanates from how they PWDs perceive their interaction with other members of the community- they strongly feel that it is "us (PWDs) against them (other members of the community)" who discriminate, stigmatize and isolate them; hence the hostile behaviors.

Kenya government has ratified many international and policies regarding inclusion of PWDs in socio-economic activities. For example, the 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pledging to leave no one behind in the global efforts to realize the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2021). The government therefore needs to identify and remove obstacles to full participation of PWDs in socio-economic activities. The government has attempted to do this by enacting policies and acts as stipulated above; however, the study found out that PWDs felt that some of these policies are not adhered to even by the government itself. Hence it would be difficult for other members of the community to implement some of these policy stipulations. One that stood out was the 10% rule employment of PWDs both by government and private sector. However, it should be noted that generally, this rule is not adhered to since some employers discriminate against PWDs as they perceive them to be incapable of doing any work. In addition, as Stevens (2004) argues, hindrances to utilizing impaired individuals from the businesses' point of view - lack of related experience, lack of required aptitudes, an absence of console and composing abilities was seen to be a noteworthy obstruction.

As stated in the National disability Act (GoK, 2004), people with disabilities are full citizens and have equal rights and are entitled to dignity, equal treatment, independent living and full participation in the society and a quality of life as well. By so doing they can also contribute to the national development if only, they are given the opportunity. However, opportunities for PWDs as the study found out are what is lacking. As expressed by PWDs themselves, due to lack of education, and training, PWDs do not have skills for many jobs that are advertised. This is also confirmed by Maina (2016) who stated that their bosses think people with

PWDs don't have the required job skills at great extent, majority also cited that there are perceptions that people with PWDs have difficulty doing their jobs because of their disability while 89.1% also argued there are no job training programs in the community to prepare them for work thus making them do odd jobs. About 85.3% cited that there is high level of employees who have negative attitudes and non-acceptance of people with disability and 98.1% who perceive that people with disability have higher rates of absenteeism and lateness. These sentiments perhaps reveal why the 10% employment opportunities as stipulated by the constitution is not adhered to.

There are varied factors both internal and external which inhabit the PWDs from accessing employment in Kenya making the need to create awareness on the same. Efforts should be made to sensitize the public and the PWDs themselves to promote awareness and understanding of the rights of PWDs and advocate against traditional stereotypes and prejudices in society. The study recommends for creation of a policy document that can be used by stakeholders to enhance the situation on how PWDs are perceived in the community. In addition, policy makers should also be enlightened, for example, in assigning programs and projects to people with disability who need help in the society.

The rights of persons with disabilities to participate in their societies can be achieved primarily through political and social action. Many countries have taken important steps to eliminate or reduce barriers to full participation. Legislation has in many cases been enacted to guarantee to disabled persons the rights to, and opportunities for, schooling, employment and access to community facilities, to remove cultural and physical barriers and to proscribe discrimination against disabled persons. In many cases, public education and awareness campaigns have been launched to educate the public to alter its attitudes and actions towards disabled persons. Often, disabled persons have taken the lead in bringing about an improved understanding of the process of equalization of opportunities. In this context, they have advocated their own integration into the mainstream of society (UN, 2021). Despite such efforts, disabled persons are yet far from having achieved equal opportunities and the degree of integration of disabled persons into society is yet far from satisfactory in most countries.

What was strikingly unique from the study findings was that Maybe, it could be a strategy to counter against any envisaged aggression on PWDs or its one way of venting out their frustrations when they are unable to communicate their desires. PWDs often exhibit diverse interactions with strangers in public spaces, ranging from positive through to outwardly hostile. However, an overriding cause of such behavior is the continuing pervasiveness of societal attitudes which construct PWDs subjectivities in terms of vulnerability, or disabled people as 'out of place' in specific spaces (Kitchin, 1998; Porcelli et al., 2014).

From the foregoing discussion, it has emerged that persons with disabilities are excluded, discriminated, stigmatized, alienated and persecuted in different ways as a result of perceptions of understanding and knowledge of them by the

community. This confirms that the society is inadequately informed of all the rights of PDWs. This is further evident when it emerged that even government administrators were not aware that PWDs are constitutionally entitled to 10% of all jobs and 10% of all government tender. It also emerged that there are no adequate integration programs for persons with disabilities in the community and therefore are difficult to recognize their individual and social needs. Further, it emerged that there is no evidence based practical experience for inclusive culture strategies for persons with disabilities in the communities.

9. Conclusion

From the findings as discussed above, it is clear that communities have formed certain perceptions on PWDs that inhibit them from including them in community based activities, in the area of employment and in education/schooling. These perceptions have been formed as a result of how other people relate and interact with PWDs. It is therefore necessary to mobilize personal and community action, change social attitudes and beliefs that lead to persons with disability being excluded and increase people's knowledge and understanding of persons with disabilities and the benefits of inclusive communities. The study recommends that specific job opportunities be designed or redesigned to accommodate persons with disabilities in the community. It also recommends for removal of structural and socio-economic barriers to inclusion within communities and thus invest and enhance community support integration programmes for persons with disabilities. It further recommends for provision of the right measure of individual support and intervention strategies to ensure inclusivity and life fulfilling environments for persons with disabilities within their respective communities.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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