



Perceptions of Stakeholders on the Involvement of People with Disabilities in Policy making towards Voting Education in Bauchi State

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Abstract

This study investigated the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making towards voting education in Bauchi State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, and the target population comprised all stakeholders concerned with making policy for people with disabilities in Bauchi State. Two hundred (200) respondents were sampled for the study using stratified and systematic sampling techniques. Questionnaire was used to collect all necessary data with a reliability co-efficient of 0.79. The data collected were analyzed using mean rating, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that, there was a significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on educational qualification. However, the study pointed out that, there was no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on gender. Based on these findings, the study recommended that proportionate elective positions should be reserved for people with disabilities in all political parties to ensure effective voting exercise. People with disabilities should be educated on the need to always make themselves available in every policy making process so that they will not be shelved and relegated as non-useful members of the society. There should be laws that will mandate every political party to carry disabled along in policy making process since their votes are valid during elections. Also, the study recommended that, every discrimination against people with disabilities should be eradicated in our society.

Key words: people with disabilities, policy making, inclusive society.

1. Introduction

The group which is often described as people with disabilities has problems with their bodies that make it hard for them to do things that other people who are physically normal can do easily. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2012) sees people with disabilities as a group of persons who suffer some form of

deformity that make it hard for them to make use of their entire body easily. Dangamawa (2019) describes people with disabilities as individuals or group of individuals who are unable to perform as a result of mental or physical unfitness. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2017) defines people with disabilities as people incapable to pursue an occupation because of a physical or mental impairment. People with disabilities generally face the

condition of being unable to perform as a result of physical or mental unfitness and throughout history these vulnerable persons have been oppressed and made to become an unimportant segment of the society. This situation makes them socially and economically disadvantaged and denies them the rights to express their opinions. Disability has more or less become a global phenomenon. It is estimated by Dangamawa (2013) that there are about 500 million people with disability worldwide with about 75% living in developing countries. Challenge Your Disability Initiative (CYDI, 2008) opined that about 25% of Nigerian population are people living with different forms of disabilities.

This group which is described as people with disabilities are made up of the blind, the deaf/dumb, cripple etc., this category of people as submitted by United Nation Organization (UNO, 2019) have political right to vote in any election and can also participate in policy making process of their respective country.

Policy making is the making of policies. It is also described as the formulation of ideas or plans that are used by an organization or government as a basis for making decision. Nigel (2002) describe policy making as the elaboration and description of solutions to societal problem. More precisely, policy making is a government statement of what it intends to do or not what to do including law, regulation decisions, etc. (Sule, 2016). Policy making also refers to a long series of actions carried out to solve societal problems. CYDI (2008) sees policy making as the process by which governments translate their political vision into programme and action to deliver the desired results that will bring change in the real world.

Therefore, in any given democratic environment, policies are made by the elected representatives of people. At parliamentary level, the elected members make laws and regulations affecting the lives of the entire citizens while translations of such rules remain effectively in the hand of executives. Therefore, participation in policy making is not limited to one group of people. It involves all qualified citizens irrespective of gender, religion and disability (Uba, 2016). Abubakar (2018) submitted that, people living with disabilities are often deprived of some basic rights and one of such fundamental rights which they have been deprived of is the right to have say in the management of their country.

Consequent upon this, the populace feels that these vulnerable people may not likely become useful in any public affairs. He goes further to mention some individuals such as Woodrow Wilson, Ronald Reagan, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, etc, who, despite their disabilities rose to lead their great nations.

The office of the High commissioner for Human Right which is popularly known as OHCHR (2018) reported that all people (people with disabilities included) who have nationality of a country have the right to have a say in how their country is run. The office therefore lays great stress on the right of men and women believed to be physically-challenged to get involved in the running of a state. Sule (2016) submitted that government of developing countries should make laws and regulation that will enable people living with disabilities have equal chances of getting a job in the public services as well as holding elective offices. This submission is in line with covenant of the UNO (2016) which clearly spelt out some articles, particularly Article 29 which emphasizes on the right to take part in politics. This

Article also maintains that all people with disabilities have right to involve in policy making of their country as anyone else. By taking part in politics, people living with disabilities can make sure that government makes laws and decisions that are good for them.

Convention on the Right of People Disabilities (CRPD, 2018) says there is need on the part of all governments to encourage people with disabilities to be more involved in community services by joining organizations of people interested in politics, joining political parties and getting together to form organization of people with disabilities. With these strategies, they cannot only vote in an election but they can also stand to be voted for in any form of elections. OHCHR (2018) opines that developing countries should make legislation that would create chances for physically-challenged to stand for election and hold public offices on equal basis with others. He also argued that some advanced countries such as Australia and Canada made such laws which enable people living with disabilities to seek for elective offices.

OHCHR (2018) also argues that for such legislation to be effective and efficient, government should make disability discrimination unlawful. The office also makes reference to Australia that made some Acts which prohibit discrimination on the ground of a person's disability in many areas of public life which include; involvement in policy making, accommodation, education, provision of goods and services, etc. The office therefore urges developing nations to embark on enlightenment campaign that will change the perception of the populace on the involvement of the people with disabilities in politics- As most people tend to believe that these people living with disabilities cannot have say in the

running and controlling of the nations' affairs. Also, curriculum developers should design a scheme that will go a long way in uprooting the people stereo typical feeling that public office should only be held by physically normal persons.

Convention on the right of persons with disabilities (CRPD) (2018) states that political parties shall guarantee to person with disabilities political rights and opportunity on equal basis with others and undertake to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in political and public life and can vote and may be elected. The convention also submitted that these vulnerable persons' rights shall be protected by allowing them to vote by secret ballot in election and public referendums, without any form of intimidation or molestation.

To this end, the CRPD made reference to the Liberian election, where the National Electoral Commission together with the international formulation for election system (IFES), printed Tactile Ballot Guide to enable voters who are blind to mark their ballot independently, thereby preserving their right to vote in secret. It is also reported by Umar (2018) that Tactile Ballot Guides have been used in many developing countries such as Ghana, Armenia and Yemen. He also argues that this strategy will help in mobilizing people with disability to participate in both political and public life and thereby making their voice heard in policy making process of the nation. More importantly, their participation in politics will guarantee their integration into the wider society.

Sule (2016) is of the view that participation of people with disabilities into politics and public affairs will breed effective voting education. (Abubakar) (2012) defines inclusive society as one where all people feel valued, their differences respected and their basic need

are met so that they live together as one single society. In such a society attempt should be made to empower and promote, the social, economic and political inclusive of all irrespective of age, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion and other consideration. Abubakar (2012) observed that in Bauchi State Nigeria there are about 45 thousand people that are believed to be people living with disabilities. Some of these people are educated but always feel isolated from the wider society on account of this, they keep themselves away from politics and indeed public affairs in general. They are always stereotyped as incapable to hold any elective office.

In some countries, peoples with disabilities do not vote while others adopt different techniques which guarantee their involvement in the decision-making process of their nations. The measures therefore yielded some fruitful results as a great number do not only vote but can also contest for any elective office. This research intends to investigate the perception of stakeholder on the ways and techniques that could guarantee the involvement of people living with disabilities in policy making toward effective voting system in Bauchi state Nigeria.

1.1 Research Question

The following research question was raised to guide this study

- What are the perceptions of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education in Bauchi State?

1.2 Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with

disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on gender.

- There is no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on educational qualification.

2. Methodology

This is a descriptive survey study as it sought to investigate the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education in Bauchi State. Daramola (2006) says descriptive survey is a systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a given population or areas of interest factually. The target population for this study included all stakeholders concerned with making policy for people with disabilities in Bauchi State. A total of 200 respondents were sampled for the study using stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. The questionnaires in this study were validated through application of content validity. According to Gay (1981), content validity is a matter of judgment by the researcher and professionals. Thus, the researcher sought expert advice, comments and suggestions that he considers and incorporated in order to validate the questionnaires. Test, re-test method using Spearman's Rank order Correlations was used to test the reliability of the instrument. A reliability co-efficient value of 0.82 was obtained and this was deemed appropriate for the study. The mean rating was used to analyze the data and provide answers to research question raised, while t-test and ANOVA were used to test the generated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

Table 1 below shows the results of data analysis on the stakeholders' perceptions on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward inclusive society in Bauchi State.

Research Question: *What is the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education in Bauchi State?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Perception of Stakeholders on the Involvement of People with Disabilities in Policy Making toward voting education in Bauchi State

Items	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Remarks
Making laws to allow people with disabilities to contest for any elective post	3.34	0.63	Affirmed
Educating the populace that disabled people can equally stand for elective offices	3.29	0.72	Affirmed
Use of Tactile Ballot Guide to aid visually impaired	3.24	0.79	Affirmed
Making laws to allow people with disabilities to contest for any political party position.	3.19	0.74	Affirmed
Educating people with disabilities that they can vote and be voted for	3.16	0.78	Affirmed
Joining organizations of people in politics by disabled people	3.09	0.65	Affirmed
Joining political parties by people with disabilities	3.00	0.66	Affirmed
Using of sign language to aid the deaf/dump during election	2.98	0.84	Affirmed
Making discrimination against disabilities unlawful	2.95	0.77	Affirmed
Provision of adequate security to protect the lives of people with disabilities during election	2.95	0.71	Affirmed
Provision of enough wheel chairs to facilitate the movement of physically challenged during election	2.58	0.63	Affirmed
Consulting and involving people with disabilities in decision making that concern them directly or indirectly	2.54	0.49	Affirmed

Source: *Respondents views*

The results in the table above indicated that all the items were affirmed by the respondents as part of the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education. This is because all items have mean score of 2.50 and above, indicating positive perception of

stakeholders toward voting education by involving people with disabilities in policy making. Thus, policy making toward voting education would be achieved by allowing people with disabilities to run for elective positions, participate in politics and be involved in decision making, join political parties, vote and be voted for, as

well as avoiding discrimination against them. This finding is in line with OHCHR (2018) who opined that developing countries should make legislation that would create chances for physically-challenged to stand for election and hold public offices on equal basis with others.

The disabled have a lot to offer to the realization of an inclusive society provided they are actively involved in the decision and policy making process of our society and country.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of the Perception of Stakeholders on the Involvement of People with Disabilities in policy making toward voting education in Bauchi State based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t_critical	Sig.	Decision
Male	100	48.75	10.94					
Female	100	47.00	10.58	198	1.32	1.960	0.203	Not Rejected

*Significant at P>0.05

The result above shows that the calculated significance values of 0.203 is greater than the chosen significance value of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on gender. This implies that the perception of male and female stakeholders does not differ on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on gender.

This result is consistent with the assertion of Uba (2016) that participation in policy

Table 3: ANOVA Table on the Perception of Stakeholders on the Involvement of People with Disabilities in policy making toward voting education in Bauchi State based on Educational Qualification

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses generated in this study were analyzed using inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: *There is no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on gender.*

making is not limited to one group of people, it involves all qualified citizens irrespective of gender, religion and disability. The likely reason for this finding is because there is ability in disability. The disabled can also contribute substantially and immensely to finding solutions to our societal problems, which may account for the same perception expressed by the respondents regardless of their gender.

Ho2: *There is no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on educational qualification.*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	4631.225	3	1543.742	11.15*	8.53	.000	Rejected
Within Groups	27132.650	196	138.432				
Total	31763.875	199					

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

The result above shows that the calculated significance value of 0.000 is less than the chosen significance value of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on educational qualification. This means that stakeholders do not have the same opinion on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education. Sequel to the establishment of a significant difference between the means, further test was carried out on the various combinations of means to find out where the difference occurred.

The test was conducted using Duncan Post-Hoc procedure at 0.05 alpha level. The Post Hoc is a statistical procedure used to determine in which of the groups the difference actually lies. The results of Post-Hoc analysis indicate that perceptions of stakeholders with B.A/B.Sc/B.A (Ed) had the highest contribution to the difference on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education. Thus, the significance difference noticed above in Table 3 was accounted for by the perception of stakeholders with B.A/B.Sc/B.A (Ed) degree. This result concurs with the opinion of Umar (2018) who averred that participation of people with disabilities in politics will guarantee their integration into the wider society. The differences in

the perception of stakeholders based on educational qualification could be attributed to the large number of people with disabilities in Bauchi State. Every individual is entitled to his/her right either as majority or minority member of a society. The involvement or otherwise of people with disabilities in the policy making process could generate different opinions among the elites or political gladiators, considering their large number in the state. Hence, the likely reason for significant difference observed above based on educational qualification.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that people with disabilities should be involved in the decision and policy making process in order to ensure an effective voting by disabled people and by making laws that will allow them to run for elective positions, participate actively in politics and be involved in decision making process. Educational qualification had influence on the perception of stakeholders regarding the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education. However, there was no significant difference in the perception of stakeholders on the involvement of people with disabilities in policy making toward voting education based on gender. Based on these findings, proportionate elective positions should be reserved for people with disabilities in all political parties to ensure their full participation in election



processes. There should be laws that will mandate every political party to carry disabled along in policy making process since their votes are valid during elections. Also, every discrimination against people with disabilities should be eradicated in our society. People with disabilities should be educated on the need to always make themselves available in every policy making process so that they will not be shelved and relegated as non-useful members of the society. Similarly, the perceptions of people with disabilities should be sought in or in order to determine willingness and readiness to be involved in policy making toward effective voting exercise.

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