

Abstract

The objectives of the study on “Building Awareness of Rights and Social Opportunities for Persons with Physical Impairment and Physical Disabilities” are to study the process of building awareness of the rights and social opportunities to which persons with physical impairment and physical disabilities are entitled and to study the extension of such awareness to people with disabilities and society with a view to reduce unfair discriminations against people with disabilities. The study adopts a qualitative approach. The samples consist of 15 persons with physical impairment and physical disabilities. Emphasis is given to an in-depth study and understanding of their feelings, life experiences, and work toward such awareness. Data are collected using interview, observation and narration of life history.

The study finds that people with disabilities have a process of awareness building with regard to their rights and social opportunities. Starting with themselves, they have a positive perception of their disabilities and try to move beyond the disabilities, trying to seek opportunity to society. The society in turn offers them opportunity and benefits, creating the environment and facilities for them, presenting with a positive image, accepting and offering opportunity for them to participate in social activities on an equal basis, including support from social networks, exchange of advice and peer counseling. Important problems and obstacles to access to rights and opportunity of people with disabilities are negative attitude on the part of people with disabilities and their families as well as society that still views disabilities as disadvantaged and provides support in an inappropriate and unconstructive manner. There are discriminations based on disabilities as well as on unfair treatments. The approaches adopted by the target group to solve the problems are encouraging people with disabilities to become motivated and take a more active interest in their own rights and opportunities, encouraging society to become more aware of their rights and dignity and to listen more to the voice of people with disabilities, promoting dissemination and

understanding about disabilities through trainings, seminars, and technical conferences, forming groups to demand their rights, and taking appropriate legal action.

However, people with disabilities have two important expectations, i.e. desire for social participation on an equal and sustainable manner so as to create an opportunity for society to understand their needs and limitations and their role in policy setting and development of such social welfare activities as income insurance for people with disabilities, generation of knowledge on the disability rights in a social model, and proactive approach to disability work.

The study recommends that people with disabilities should accept their disabilities and view them in a more positive manner, be alert to their rights and duties, and strengthen self and disability organizations through networking with other social networks in all sectors, while the government and agencies concerned should develop a policy on people with disabilities, encourage them to play a participating role in various activities and put in place agencies to inspect and supervise the implementation as well as promoting the development of disability plans at the local level.