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Livelihood Issues of Persons with Disabilities: A Sociological Study Based on the Thunukai Divisional Secretariat of Mullaitivu District

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Abstract

Livelihood issue is the alarming contemporary social problem encountered by the persons with disabilities (PWDs). This community based study was conducted in the Thunukai Divisional Secretariat in Mullaitivu District. The objective of this study was to assess the livelihood issues of PWDs. Mixed method study design was used in this study. Based on the stratified random sampling technique, 112 PWDs were selected for this study. Primary data were collected through the interviewer administered questionnaire, case study method and key informant interviews. Quantitative data collected through questionnaire method entered in Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 and analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Thematic content analysis was employed to analyses qualitative data. Results reveal that males were the majority (62%) among PWDs. Among the PWDs 48.2% belongs to the 30-45 years of age group. Majority (83%) of PWDs completed secondary education. Wage labour (26.8%) and agriculture (17.9%) were the important occupations of PWDs. Also 59.8% of PWDs were the breadwinners of family. Results also indicate that 55.4% of PWDs received less than 20000 Rupees as the total monthly income of the family. The correlation coefficient between the total monthly income and total monthly expenditure of the family was -0.133. Results also reveal that majority of people with war-related disabilities were not satisfied with the livelihood assistance provided by the government institutions. Severity of disabilities, social stigma and discrimination in employment opportunities, social exclusions, and poor accessibility, poor infra-structural facilities and poor educational qualifications were the underlying causes of livelihood issues of PWDs. This study strongly recommends that assistance for sustainable livelihood and more inclusive community based vocational rehabilitation programs should be provided to improve the livelihood conditions of PWDs.

Keywords: discrimination, social exclusion, stigma, vulnerabilities, wage labor