

# INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL: CASE OF RACHUONYO SOUTH SUB COUNTY, HOMA BAY

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**Abstract:** The problems that persons with disabilities face are majorly as a result of the constructs in the mind of the society which reduces their opportunities, through cultural beliefs and attitudes built by the society. This is further compounded by the immediate environment of PWDs, i.e., the family. The study investigated the influence of the family on the empowerment of persons with disabilities in Rachuonyo South-Homa Bay County. The study objectives examined the influence of the family on the empowerment of PWDs at the household level in Rachuonyo South. This study was guided by the Social Model of Disability and sampled 83 people obtained by employing Yamane 1967 formula. Questionnaires and FGDs were employed to obtain data from the field. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and frequency counts were used in the analysis of data. The study found that cultural beliefs and attitudes influenced the decisions at the family level impacting negatively on PWDs empowerment and the family should provide an enabling environment for PWDs to access opportunities. The study recommends that the government to increase awareness campaigns, upscale empowerment funding's and activities that promote income generations among PWDs and aggressively print and disseminate the national disability policy.

**Keywords:** Family, Empowerment and persons with disabilities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The world today has approximately 1 billion persons with disabilities which accounts for about 15% of the global population (UNCRPD, 2013). It is unfortunate that their contribution cannot be effectively realized due to the existing barriers they experience. Persons with disabilities, (PWDs) face physical, social, economic and cultural barriers (UNCRPD, 2013). Guru Raghevendra, N. Janardhana, & D. Muralidhar (2015) states that social and cultural attitudes in communities worldwide and especially in developing nations play an important role in limiting the opportunities of PWDs for full participation in social and economic life, often even within their own families. Families also become victims of discrimination and human rights abuse. Differently abled children's are kept hidden away at their home, denied basic rights of mobility, education and employment a fact supported by (Groce 1999). PWDs are viewed as dependent persons. The discrimination experienced by PWDs in some cases starts from the family members and spreads right up to the policy makers and state authorities (Guru et. al,2015).

According to Guru et. al, (2015) Superstition prevailing in culturally rooted communities play a big role in subjecting the PWDs to various harmful treatments. Guru et. al, (2015) further explains that most family members are reluctant to accept disability within the family, this is due to the stigma attached to such disabilities. This explains why disabled members in a family are hidden. Families often lock or chain their children with disabilities due to helplessness, ignorance and/or under social pressure. There is a fear that they would be victims of disgrace and indignity and thereby family members lose the social and or cultural status or acceptance in the community.

Guru et. al, (2015) explains that according to the Indian laws, all kith and kin in the family are eligible to get their share of inherited property, but in reality, PWDs are denied these rights. The siblings take responsibility of providing care and they would enjoy the property meant for the PWD. Families perceive that PWDs are incapable of managing their property; they are denied of their property rights and made dependent on the able-bodied siblings. This is even made worse when family members ensure the chronic condition of the disability by denying treatment or other aids, so that the siblings enjoy the property. Another aspect highlighted by Guru et. al,(2015) is that in India it is customary that the elders arrange marriages. It is almost next to impossible for a family with a PWD member to have its members eligible for marriage to find a prospective spouse. This is because of the stigma and the disability being seen as a family illness.

According to Bunning K, Gona JK, Newton CR, & Hartley S (2017) the extent of awareness and experience with PWDs in a person are critical factors in building a positive attitude. Parents' understanding of disabilities is closely aligned to social and cultural perceptions. Bunning et.al, (2017) explains that what makes disability in a family even more complicated is the fact that in some sub-Saharan communities improper family relations, including extra-marital affairs and incestuous relationships have been cited as perceived causes of disability with the mothers generally implicated. Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), face discrimination more in Africa and other developing countries than in the developed world. This is partly because disability is seen more in terms of cultural and traditional shortcomings rather than a medical condition, and is also yet to be seen as a development issue (African Commission on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2014).

Today in Kenya, it is estimated that approximately 1,330,312 million people have some form of a disability. This translates to an overall rate of 3.5%; the largest proportion is of Physical impairment, (413,698) followed by visual impairment, (331,594). Females constitute 51.3%; this is as per the Kenya population census, 2009.

According to Kenya UNCRPD (2011) in the 2009 Kenya population Census, about 46% of the population live in absolute poverty and a third of PWDs are in gainful employment. According to Action Network for the Disabled (2012) in its report of a study carried out in various Counties of Kenya, PWDs are normally unaware of opportunities they can access therefore there is need to empower PWDs on their social, political and economic rights that will enable them access services and opportunities available in their communities.

According to Bunning et. al., (2017) in Kenya many children with disabilities are kept apart from the local community in restricted environments, to protect them from the abuses of others and to keep them safe. Such actions result in the exclusion PWDs from the same places, opportunities and social groupings as other members of the community.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Poverty, Family and Empowerment of PWDs:

According to Devandas (2013) the population of PWD's is estimated at one billion people in the world. This is the largest and most disadvantaged minority group. 80% of all PWD's live in the developing nations of the world where they make up 20% of the world's poorest people. As established by Unicef, Groce, & Deluca (2013) relationship between poverty and disability is where poverty is said to be closely linked to disability, and it is a major contributor to factors leading to disability, and disability also traps people into poverty. The prevalence rate of disability is high among the poor people because of the conditions in which they live. Disability can also result in poverty when there are limited opportunities for skills development and employment. According to Wapling (2012) PWDs family income is often not sufficient to meet basic needs and their live is characterized with poor living conditions. They experience high levels of chronic poverty, but Guru et.al., (2015) feels that in most of the instances it is deliberate and continues to explain that, among rural communities in India children with disabilities face deprivations and limited opportunities in their lives, this is as a result of family neglect. For this reason, the UN Convention on the rights of Persons With Disabilities CRPD (2013) puts emphasis on the rights of persons with disabilities to; social protection without discrimination, access to food, clothing, clean water, affordable and accessible services, assistive devices and related to disability needs, social protection

and poverty reduction programs, adequate training, counseling, financial assistance/ credit facilities and respite care, public housing programs, social welfare programs and retirement benefits.

In a research report by Tomlin (2013) half the population in Kenya lives below the poverty line, results indicate that about 52 % of individuals without disability were poor, and up to 67% of PWD's, were found to be poor. This shows a 15% difference, between PWD's and persons without disabilities. This is the largest across the 15 countries where the study was done, and it means that the poverty levels faced by PWD's are far higher relative to the rest of the society. In the year 2000/2001, Kenya launched a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which in part, includes people with physical disabilities, although not including persons with other categories of disabilities, and recommends that further research is needed on why the incidence of disability amongst the poor is so high, and how multidimensional poverty can be reduced. In an attempt to offer long lasting mitigation measures, Devandas (2013) explains that the best alternative is to empower PWD's and remove the barriers which prevent them from participation in the family/household level and at the community level; getting a quality education, finding decent work, and having their voices heard.

According to Grut (2007) disability in an individual results from not having an opportunity to do daily activities, carry out social roles and participating in development activities considered common in the community, due to physical, visual, hearing, mental and/or intellectual reduced function and environmental barriers. This argument fails to recognize, the society's exclusion mechanisms against PWDs as another barrier. PWDs are excluded in earning incomes and consumption to cover education, health, social and political participation, security and freedom, environmental quality, and also social justice and human rights which are major factors that determine wellbeing. This should lead to increased interest in improving PWDs access to food, shelter, education and health care and focus is directed towards improving service delivery to PWDs and to increase their choices and participation in decision making in all aspects surrounding their life.

Grut (2007) further explains that, society and family support and acceptance also have implications. The support and acceptance from people surrounding PWDs in a way can enhance or lower one's self esteem, important in building self-confidence and success in ones under taking and development.

According to Grut (2007) the high unemployment rate experienced in the developing countries, Kenya included, affects PWDs even more than others. This can be mitigated by enhancing skills and vocational training as an option for entry in self-employment and thus a way out of poverty, but in most cases such opportunities are limited to PWDs. Vick and Posarac (2011) explain that disability may lead to poverty as a result of adverse impact in education, employment, earnings, and increased expenditures of PWDs. In education, school attendance and access to education may be restricted. This restricts human capital accumulation and in turn limits employment opportunities and reduces productivity/earning later in life for PWDs. Disability also may prevent work or reduce the amount of work a person does, thus restricting the ability to earn an income resulting in poor standards of living and eventually poverty. Ofuani (2011) concludes that PWDs are always marginalized and excluded from the society and live in poverty, lacking the means to access opportunities that guarantee basic necessities of life. Therefore the study sought to examine the influence of the family on the empowerment of PWDs at the household level.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework:**

This study was guided by "The social model of disability" theory. The strategy was to examine the influence of the family on the empowerment of PWDs at the household level and recommend appropriate strategies that would empower PWDs in all sectors of the social, political and economic institutions in Homa-Bay County. Since perspectives, expressed through narratives and subjective opinion, are a socially constructed phenomenon, the social model of disability theory was the most suitable in informing this study.

Lang (2001) explains the central assumptions of the Social Model of Disability, which argues that; the popular perception common about disability influences the way PWDs, DPOs, policy makers and NGOs, alike consider the family/stakeholder and service provider's legitimate role in deciding how resources are distributed. It assumes that the perception "disability" is as a result of society's failure to provide adequate and appropriate services to PWDs, thus not being able to meet the needs of PWDs within the contemporary social organization of society which limits their participation in the society. It also assumes that disabled people are subject to oppression and negative social attitudes that undermine their dignity and status as citizens. It further argues that this social oppression leads to institutional discrimination portrayed in terms of limited opportunities in accessing, education, employment, transport, and leisure and support services.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework:

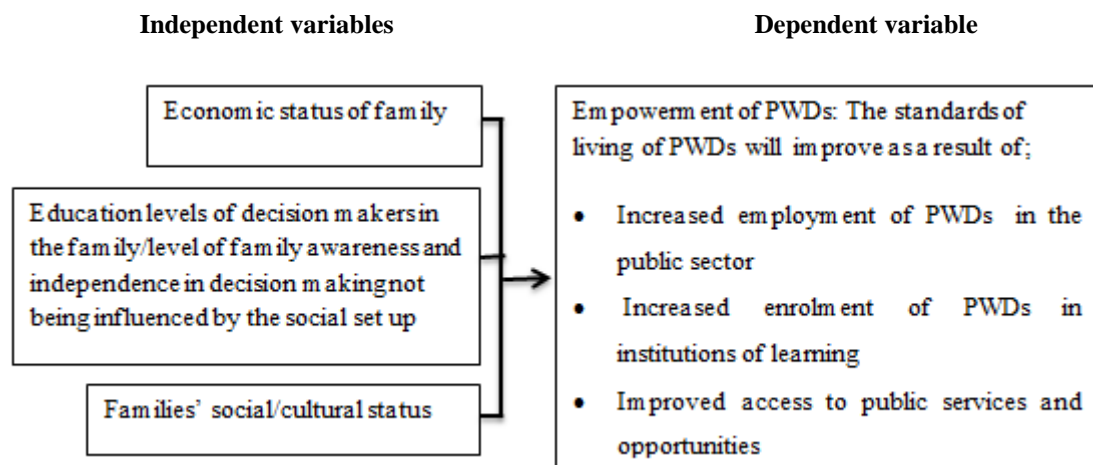


Figure 2.1: Relationship between PWDs Empowerment Variables

Source: Author, (2018)

## 3. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

### 3.1 The Study Area:

The research study which was conducted in Homa-Bay County in Southern Nyanza area, Western Kenya along the shores of Lake Victoria bordering Kisii County to the south east, Migori County to the South West, Nyamira County to the North East and Kisumu County to the North. The County covers an estimated area of 3154.7 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 963,794 (KNBS, 2010). Rachuonyo South which is in Homa-Bay County, has a total population estimate of 220,663 (KNBS, 2010).

It is bordered by West Karachuonyo to the North West, East Karachuonyo to the North East, and Kisumu County to the east, to the South East is Nyamira County, while Kisii County is to the South West of Rachuonyo South and Rangwe is on its western border (County Government of Homa Bay, 2013). According to County Government of Homa Bay (2013), Homa-Bay County has 2 gazetted forests covering 29.6 km<sup>2</sup> one of which covers Wire Hills in Kasipul division.

The main economic activity in this area is agriculture; potatoes are grown by a majority of the population especially in Kabondo, pineapples and water melon are also grown widely, and there is also small scale dairy farmers and coffee farmers. Another notable economic activity in Rachuonyo South is brick making.

### 3.2 Sampling plan:

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) a target population is the entire group of individuals or objects to which researchers are interested in generalizing the conclusions. The study targeted 502 individuals from 2 groups registered by the Ministry of Culture and Social services as Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs). These self-help groups have members who are also registered with National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) from the 2 Divisions of Kasipul and Kabondo. In kasipul 233 members and Kabondo 124 members, 122 parents/guardians and teachers of students with disabilities in Sikri Technical Training Institute for the Blind and Deaf (STTIBD) and 23 members of the provincial administration from the 23 locations within the 2 divisions of Kasipul and Kabondo, as indicated in County Government of Homa Bay, (2013).

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique:

The researcher sampled a sample size of 83 respondents from a target population of 502. According to Singh, Ajay S, & Masaku, Micah B. (2014) a sample size of 83 respondents at a confidence level of 95 with margin error of 0.10 is appropriate for a target population of 502. Yamane (1967) formula was used to obtain the representative sample size from the target population, where:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where n = Number of samples,

N = Total population

e = Error tolerance

Therefore the sample size for the study based on Yamane's Formula with a confidence level of 95 with margin error of 0.10 will yield a sample size of  $n = N / (1 + N e^2) = 502 / 1 + 502 * (0.10)^2 = 83.38$  (83) respondents.

The researcher selected respondents from the 4 clusters of DPO members from Kasipul, DPOs from Kabondo, Parents/guardians and teachers and the provincial administration depending on their numerical strength using proportionate method. Through the proportionate method the sample size is obtained by dividing the number of respondents in each cluster by the total target population and then multiplying the results by the sample size as illustrated below: To obtain an appropriate sample size for each stratum, the researcher used Stattek (2012) proportionate stratification formula where:

$$nh = (N_h / N) * n$$

Where:

nh-Sample Size for stratum h

Nh- Population Size for stratum h

N-Total Population Size

n-Total Sample Size

Hence, sample size for DPO members Kasipul was:

$$nh = (N_h / N) * n$$

$$N_h = (233 / 502) * 83 = 38$$

Applying the formula to the other strata, the sample size was as shown in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1: Sampling Frame**

CLUSTER	TARGET POPN	SAMPLE SIZE	%
DPO members Kasipul	233	38	45%
DPO members Kabondo Kasipul	124	21	25%
Parents/guardians and teachers STTIBD	122	20	24%
Provincial Administration Members	23	04	06%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Author (2018)

In probability sampling the researcher used a multi stage random sampling method starting from the first stage by clustering the target population in Rachuonyo South into groups including; DPOs, parents/guardians and teachers of students with disabilities in STTIBD and members of the provincial administration. According to Dudovskiy (2016) multi stage random sampling was used because it made primary data collection more effective from the geographically dispersed population taking into account that the area covered 2 constituencies of Kasipul and Kabondo Kasipul. It also made the study more cost and time effective. The researcher then used simple random sampling method because it is the purest and the most straight forward probability sampling strategy on selecting DPOs members, and parents/guardians and teachers of students with disabilities in STTIBD in the second stage (Dudovskiy, 2016).

In non-probability sampling the researcher used purposive sampling method as only persons working with the provincial administration as chiefs or assistant chiefs were targeted for the study. 4 Provincial administration Officers were selected. This was due to the limited number of people who can serve as primary data source in this category (Dudovskiy, 2016). According to County Government of Homa Bay (2013) Rachuonyo South region has 23 locations.

### 3.4 Data Collection and instruments:

The study employed qualitative technique to collect data from focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interview guides and quantitative techniques by use of questionnaires to obtain primary data. Secondary data was also collected to assist in coming up with the findings. This data was collected from published reports and statistics containing relevant literature from the library and online search engines.

Two Focus group discussions (FGDs) of 10 respondents each were conducted by the researcher who also acted as a moderator and was assisted by a note taker. This is because FGDs allowed the participants to generate arguments that provided insights, ideas and inconsistencies that existed in the community in terms of their beliefs on issues related to PWDs (Tobias O. Nyumba, Kerrie Wilson, Christiana J. Derrick & Nibedita Mukherjee 2018). A predetermined focus group guide had been developed and was used with relevant themes and sub-themes where PWDs understanding of empowerment and what it means in their lives was clearly explained (Bosco & Herman, 2010, & Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). Focus group discussion data collection method was used for PWDs and the DPOs, in each of the 2 Divisions of Kasipul and Kabondo in Rachuonyo South of Homa-Bay County. There was 1 FGDs, in each Division comprising of 10 respondents giving a total of 2 FGDs and 20 respondents respectively.

The researcher used a semi structured interview to collect data from the opinion leaders. The leaders comprised of 4 provincial administration officers. This tool collected data on perception. Semi structured interviews allowed the researcher to collect fresh, new and primary information as needed and explored the cause behind the problem while at the same time increased knowledge of the researcher and the respondents (Burns, 2010).

The questionnaires was structured to obtain the required information, ensure confidentiality, have no interviewer bias and save on time and cost (Kombo & Tromp 2006). The questionnaire was structured to have both closed ended and open-ended questions necessary to obtain required information from the respondents and comprised of two sections, A and B, with each section addressing specific objectives or tried to answer specific research questions. The questionnaire was used to collect data from DPOs members and Parents/guardians and teachers.

Secondary Data according to Mugenda (2003) constitute documented materials that aid the researcher to build more insights on the study. This research study used secondary data from already documental academic materials such as Kenya population and housing census report, Kenya bureau of statistics report on PWDs, online journals from the internet, E-books, theses and dissertations, and disability manuals. Secondary data mainly constituted in the literature review and the researcher analyzed all forms of data to come up with the findings. This data was expected to make the collection of primary data be more specific since the researcher was able to make out what are the gaps and deficiencies and guided the researcher on what information was needed to meet the research objectives.

### 3.5 Data Analysis:

Raw data was sorted, edited, coded, classified and tabulated for analysis. Qualitative data was transcribed and categorized before being grouped according to the emerging themes and sub themes, which was finally presented in tables and graphs and charts. The analysis of quantitative data derived from the questionnaires, involved using descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean and frequency counts to establish existing differences between PWDs and other members of the community who are not disabled. For qualitative data, use of content analysis to identify patterns, themes and biases was applied. Both the quantitative data and qualitative data were analyzed using Microsoft excel computer package. The outcomes are presented in frequency tables, graphs and charts.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Analyses of family influence on empowerment of PWDs:

The second objective of this study was to examine the influence of the family on the empowerment of PWDs at the household level. This was done to answer the primary research question "How does the family influence the empowerment of PWDs at the household level in Homa-Bay County?" The analysis of the results of this objective is found in this section.

#### 4.1.1 Family source of income:

Regarding family source of income the study responses were received from FGDs. The study focused on areas including; the informal sector, formal employment, subsistent agriculture and, others. Responses from FGD for PWDs and DPOs a majority indicated that their family's major source of income is from formal employment, while some respondents indicated that their family's major source of income is from the informal sector. In explaining this point:

KR7 (a cobbler who is a physically challenged man):

“I wake up every morning to sit outside the wholesale shop waiting for my customers so as to repair their shoes which is how I earn my daily income”.

Discussions with the FGD respondents revealed that a small number of PWDs practice subsistence agriculture.

KR8 (a cobbler who is a physically challenged man):

“I engage in subsistence agriculture just because my spouse insists. It only supplements very minimal to the family income.”

From the findings PWDs are yet to diversify into other economic sectors such as fishing and agriculture to boost their living and economic status and increase their household income.

Wapling (2012) researched on PWDs family income which reveals that families of PWDs often don't have sufficient income to meet basic needs and are characterized with poor living conditions thus they experience high levels of chronic poverty.

#### 4.2 Socio-cultural factors influencing PWDs' families:

The study sought information on how the respondents would rate 3 factors that influence the family of PWDs on their empowerment efforts. This was important as it would establish the main determining factors that influence the family of a PWD in providing assistance that would enable their empowerment. The researcher presented 3 short statements in which the respondents were supposed to rate on a five point Likert scale of 1-5. The respondents were asked to rate; Poverty, Cultural beliefs/attitudes and Awareness levels/educational levels (of family decision makers). The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.1 below

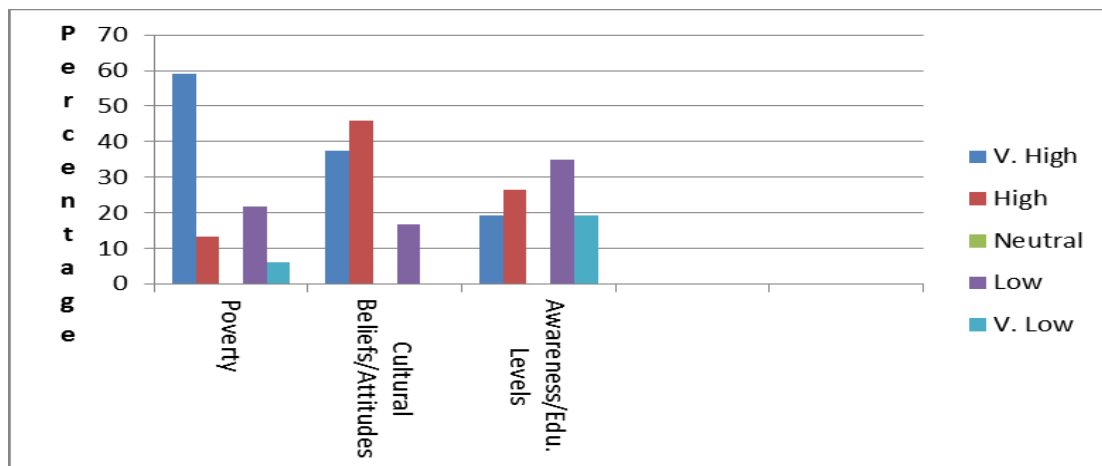


Figure 4.1: Responses on factors that influence the family on PWDs in their empowerment efforts

Source: Author (2018)

Out of the respondents who participated in the study 59% felt that poverty influences the family in their effort to empower their PWD member at a “Very High” rate, 21.7% of the respondents agreed that poverty influences the family in their effort to empower their PWD member at “Low” rate, 13.3% of the respondents thought that poverty influences the family in their effort to empower their PWD member at “High” rate, while 6% of the respondents felt that poverty influences the family in their effort to empower their PWD member at a “Very low” rate, none of the respondents responded to “neutral”.

On the factor “cultural belief/attitudes”, a majority of the respondents 45.8% are of the opinion that the family of PWDs in their effort to empower them, is influenced by cultural beliefs and attitudes at a “High” rate, 37.3% of the respondents observed that cultural belief and attitude influences the family of PWD in their effort to empower its PWD member at a “Very high” rate, while 16.9% of the respondents felt that cultural belief and attitude influences the family of PWD in their effort to empower its PWD member at a “Low” rate. There was no respondent who responded to “Neutral” and “Very low” rates on this research question.

On the factor “Awareness levels and educational levels (of family decision makers) a majority of the respondents 34.9% observed that awareness levels and/or educational levels would influence the family of PWD in their effort to empower their PWD member at a “Low” rate, 26.5% of the respondents felt that the families of PWDs in their effort to empower their member would be influenced by the awareness levels and/or educational levels factor at a “High” rate, 19.3% of the respondents felt that awareness levels and/or educational levels influenced the family of PWD in their effort to empower their PWD member at a “Very high” rate, while another 19.3% of the respondents felt that awareness levels and/or educational levels influenced the family of PWD in their effort to empower their PWD member at a “Very low” rate. There was no respondent who responded to “Neutral” rate on this research item.

From the research findings cultural belief and/or attitudes influenced the families of PWDs towards their efforts to provide empowerment to their members with special needs. This observation is supported by Zhou (2015) undertook a study in a community rehabilitation centre in Oniipa Namibia where it was found out that culturally PWDs do not deserve respect and cannot be treated the same as other people, it is the belief that PWDs are not entitled to job opportunities because it is believed that they are worthless and are a financial and social burden to their families.

#### 4.2.1 Respondents opinion on the socio-cultural factors that influence the family of PWDs:

The researcher further sought the opinion of the respondents on the socio-cultural factors that influence the family of PWDs on their empowerment efforts. This was important for the researcher to establish the respondent’s opinion on the way forward on how to mitigate on the socio-cultural hindrance to empowerment within the families of PWDs. The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.2 below

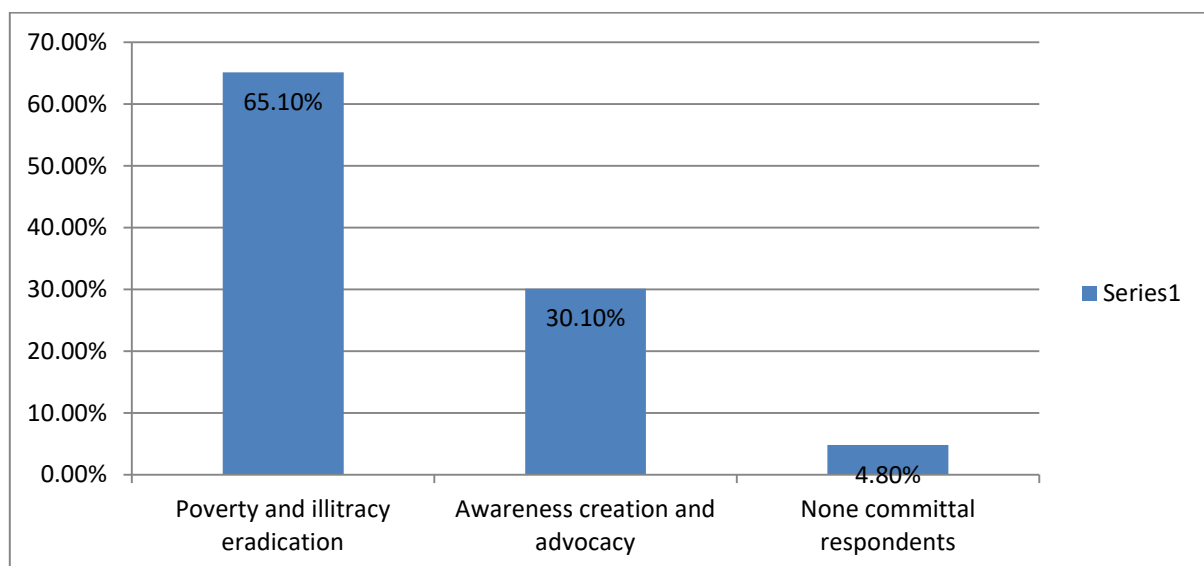


Figure 4.2: Respondents opinion on socio-cultural factors influencing the families of PWDs

Source: Author (2018)

From Figure 4.2 above, the study revealed that 65.1% of the respondents cited that poverty and illiteracy needs to be eradicated in the families of PWDs to mitigate against the socio-cultural factors influencing their empowerment efforts, 30.1% of the respondents believe that awareness creation and advocacy would be the mitigating factor in ensuring that the socio-cultural factors influencing the empowerment of PWDs is curtailed while 4.8% of the respondents did not respond to the study item.

#### 4.3 Family support:

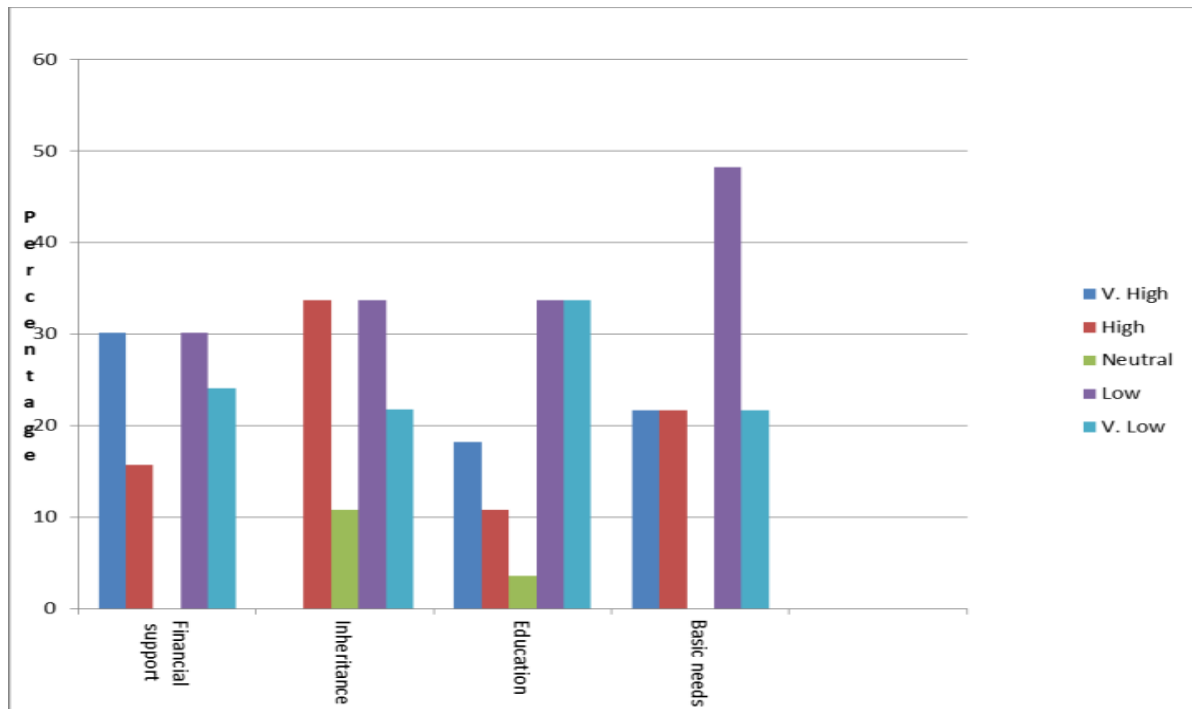
Certain factors influence the family decisions and determine what type of support its members with disabilities should be given.

##### 4.3.1 Family’s priority in providing support to its PWD members:

The study sought information on how the respondents would rate 4 factors that would enhance their empowerment. This was important as it would establish the main determining factors that are easily accessible to the family of a PWD in



providing assistance that would enable the improvement of their social status. The researcher presented 4 short statements in which the respondents were supposed to rate on a scale of 1-5, of which the lowest being “very high” and the highest being “very low”. The respondents were asked to rate the following factors; Financial support for start-up, Allocation/inheritance of agricultural land, Education and Basic needs support only. The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.3 below



**Figure 4.3: Responses on type of family support most likely provided or received by PWDs**

Source: Author (2018)

A majority of the respondents who participated, 30.1% at “Low” and 24.1% at “Very low” felt that family financial support to its members with special needs is generally not a priority, 30.1% of the respondents thought that financial support from the family to its PWD members is at “Very high”, 15.7% of the respondents thought that financial support from the family to its PWD members is at a “High” rate, none of the respondents responded to “neutral”.

On Allocation of agricultural land and or family inheritance, a majority of the respondents 33.7% at “Low” and 21.8% at “Very low” are of the opinion that a majority of the families of PWDs are not ready to allocate family inheritance especially land to its members with disabilities, 0% of the respondents felt that “Very high” rate of family support in allocating its members with disabilities family inheritance, 33.7% observed that there is a “High” rate of family support in allocating its PWD members family inheritance, 10.8% of the respondents were “neutral”.

On education support from the family, a majority of the respondents 33.7% and 33.7% responded to “Low” and “Very low” respectively meaning that PWDs get very low support from their families towards their education endeavors, 18.2% of the respondents observed that the family support on education for their PWD members are rated at “Very high”, 10.8% of the respondents felt that the rating is at “High”, while 3.6% of the respondents were “neutral”.

On family support towards the provision of “Basic needs” to its PWD members 48.2% and 21.7% of the respondents rated this support at “Low” and “Very low” respectively, 21.7% of the respondents observed that “Basic needs” support from the family to its PWDs members can be rate at “High”, 8.4% of the respondents observed that the “Basic needs” support are at a “Very high” rating. There was no respondent who responded to “Neutral” rate on this research question.

Family support to members with disabilities is very low. This findings is supported by a study by Sight Savers (2012) which found out that PWDs are less likely to be in school and are more likely to be unemployed. This is mainly as a result of their family background that culminates from poverty, strong religious and traditional belief that leads to discrimination and stigmatization of PWDs by their family members.

#### 4.4 Do families of PWDs experience challenges when accessing basic rights:

The researcher sought to find out if families of PWDs experience challenges when accessing basic needs. The responses were as shown in the figure 4.4 below

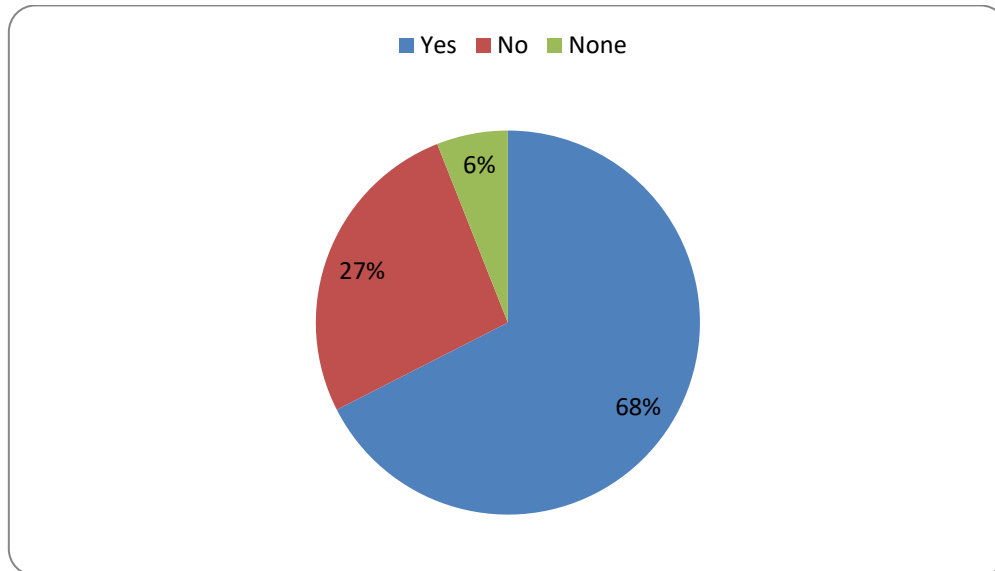


Figure 4.4: Do families of PWDs experience challenges when accessing basic rights?

Source: Author (2018)

From figure 4.4 above, it is clear that a majority of the respondents 67% agree that families of PWDs face challenges when accessing basic rights, 27% of the respondents disagreed and 6% of the respondents were none committal. From the research finding it is apparent that PWDs are discriminated against their basic rights. This implies that families of PWDs do not access services easily.

#### 4.4.1 What challenges families of PWDs face when accessing to basic rights:

The researcher required that the respondents explain their answer on the challenges families of PWDs face in accessing basic needs such as the right to education like their other siblings. This study received responses from both the questionnaire and FGDs. The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.5. below

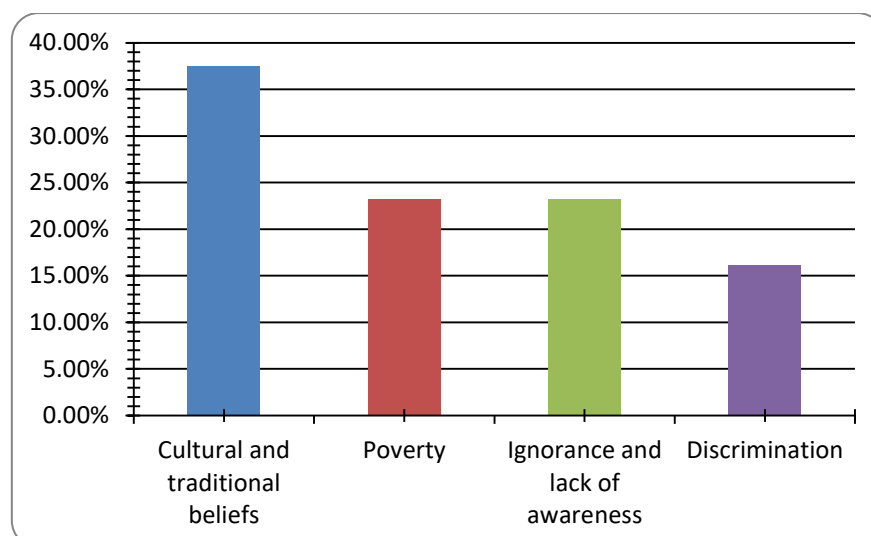


Figure 4.5: challenges families of PWDs face in accessing basic rights

Source: Author (2018).

From the research findings illustrated in Figure 4.5 above, the study revealed that 37.5% of the respondents believed that cultural and traditional beliefs hinder families of PWDs access to basic rights, 23.2% of the respondents believed that poverty is the main barriers that hinders the families of PWDs access to basic rights, 23.2% of the respondents believed that ignorance and lack of awareness is the hindering factor families of PWDs face in access to basic rights, while 16.1% of the respondents believed that discrimination hinders families of PWDs access to basic rights.

Regarding the challenges families of PWDs face in accessing basic rights the study responses received from FGDs a majority indicated that discrimination is still common in most sectors. Data from KR9 (a college student who is hearing impaired man) indicated that:

“I always experienced being discriminated especially when schools open, my siblings without disabilities are always realized first and the remains of the family income is what were used for my fare and pocket money. My fee was being paid for by an organization dealing with PWDs”.

Data from KR10 (a civil servant who is a physically challenged lady) indicated that:

“Opportunities meant for PWDs are in most cases allocated to persons without disabilities”.

From the research findings cultural and traditional beliefs negatively influence the decisions made in the families regarding provisions to its members with disabilities. This agrees with the study done by Guru et al., (2015) among rural communities in India where children with disabilities face deprivations and limited opportunities in their lives due to stigma and culture.

#### 4.5 PWDs Participation in Decision Making and House hold Activities:

Finding in the literature review revealed that barriers exist that prevent PWDs from participation in the family/household level and at the community level. The researcher sought to find out whether it is true, by including an item in the questionnaire that sought information on how often are PWDs likely to be involved in decision making and household activities. The findings are displayed in the Table 4.1 below

**Table 4.1: PWDs Participation levels**

Rating	Frequency	%
Very likely	4	4.8
Likely	18	21.7
Moderately	34	41.0
Most unlikely	27	32.5
Not at all	0	0
Total	83	100.0

*Source: Author (2018)*

From the Table 4.1 above, 41.0% of the respondents rated their involvement in decision making and household activities as being moderate, 32.5% of the respondents felt that their involvement in decision making and household activities as most unlikely. Most of the respondents felt that their input on issues was most likely not sort and if it was sort was only as a formality. From the findings, it is apparent that PWDs felt that their participation in decision making and household activities would only be sort as a last resort, 21.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that their involvement in decision making and household activities was likely, while 4.8% felt that it was very likely. This is clear that the level of marginalization and exclusion of PWDs is common even at the household level.

##### 4.5.1 Importance of consulting PWDs at the family/community level:

The researcher sought to find out whether it is important to consult PWDs on key decisions at the family/community level by including an item in the questionnaire that sought information on how important is consultation of PWDs in decision making in the family/community. The findings are displayed in the Table 4.2 below

**Table 4.2: Levels of importance of consulting PWDs**

Rating	Frequency	%
Very much important	65	78.3
Important	3	8.4
Not very important	5	13.3
Not important	0	0
Don't Know	0	0
Total	83	100.0

Source: Author (2018)

From the table 4.2 above, 78.3% of the respondents rated the importance of consulting PWDs for decisions at the family/community level as "Very much important." Most of the respondents felt very strongly that consulting PWDs in making decisions at the family/community level was important in integrating them more actively into their societies and in all development matter. In the discussions most of the respondents were of the opinion that it was important to involve members of PWDs in decisions that would affect their live and to overcome marginalization.

13.3% of the respondents felt that consulting PWDs for decisions at the family/community level as "Not very important," while 8.8% felt that it was "important." From the study findings it is clear that PWDs would like to be actively involved in family/community activities at the decision making levels and they are willing to participate actively if given the opportunity.

## 5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The objective examined the influence of the family on the empowerment of PWDs at the household level. The research findings indicate that a majority of respondents 45.8% believed that cultural belief/attitudes influenced the decisions at the family level that impact negatively on the empowerment of PWDs, 37.3% of the respondents observed that cultural belief and/or attitude influences the family of PWD in their effort to empower its PWD member at a "Very high" rate, while 16.9% of the respondents felt that cultural belief and/or attitude influences the family of PWD in their effort to empower its PWD member at a "Low" rate. There was no respondent who responded to "Neutral" and "Very low" rates on this research item. A majority of the respondents who participated, 30.1% at "Low" and 24.1% at "Very low" felt that family financial support to its members with special needs is generally not a priority, 30.1% of the respondents thought that financial support from the family to its PWD members is at "Very high", 15.7% of the respondents thought that financial support from the family to its PWD members is at a "High" rate, none of the respondents responded to "neutral".

The researcher noted that a majority of PWDs live in poverty, most families rely on income from subsistent agriculture and the informal sector for their daily living. This implies that poverty and cultural belief and/or attitudes influenced the empowerment of PWDs greatly. For this reason family support to members with disabilities is very low. This means that socio-cultural context is central to the exclusion of PWDs. From the findings it is also clear that marginalization and exclusion of PWDs is very high even at the household level.

The study further revealed that the family should provide a conducive environment that would enable PWDs access opportunities that will enable their empowerment. It was also clear that the implementation of disability mainstreaming in public services should enable PWDs access public services with ease.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The objective examined the influence of the family on the empowerment of PWDs at the household level. Analyzed data showed that majority of family income comes from formal employment while some come from the informal sector and a few earn their income from subsistence agriculture. On the factor "cultural belief/attitudes", a majority of the respondents 45.8% are of the opinion that the family of PWDs in their effort to empower them, is influenced by cultural beliefs and/or attitudes at a "High" rate, 37.3% of the respondents observed that cultural belief and/or attitude influences the family of PWD in their effort to empower its PWD member at a "Very high" rate, while 16.9% of the respondents felt that cultural belief and/or attitude influences the family of PWD in their effort to empower its PWD member at a "Low" rate. The

study further revealed that the family should provide a conducive environment that would enable PWDs access opportunities that will enable their empowerment. It was also clear that the implementation of disability mainstreaming in public services should enable PWDs access public services with ease.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned discussion, analyzed data and literature reviewed, the study makes the following recommendations:-

1. The county government especially the department of culture and sports to upscale empowerment funding's and activities that promote income generations among the vulnerable especially those living with special needs.
2. The national government, county government and the national disability council needs to aggressive increase awareness campaigns that will ensure negative effects of culture are minimized, print and disseminate the national disability policy and other related legal frameworks that empowers disabled persons in Kenya and promotes equity.

### 7.1 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH:

The research was broad based and covered a wide area that considered the socio-cultural aspects and the economic factors that affect empowerment of PWDs. The study has opened up other avenues that need further examination. These include:

1. A similar study should be undertaken in the next 4 to 8 years from now to find out the changes that have taken place in the empowerment of PWDs in Homa Bay County - Kenya.
2. This study should be done in other counties of Kenya
3. Future research should give policy makers more insight on how to overcome barriers that hinder the empowerment of PWDs.

It is necessary to ensure the full implementation of policies and legislative laws that will guarantee the empowerment of PWDs most specifically in the disability mainstreaming programs in the public sector. This will open up the socio-economic inclusion of PWDs in all aspects of development. This can easily be done if the awareness and advocacy programs are strengthened so as to ensure social acceptance.

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