

Awareness Methods Used to Provide Positive Attitude towards Adventitiously Blinded Married Women in Machakos District, Kenya

Ndathe Wangari Rachel¹, Chege Moses Gichuho²

¹Lecturer, Special Needs Education, Kenyan Universities

²M.Sc Environmental Studies, Moi University, UNEP Environmental Consultant, Kenya

Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges encountered by married women who are adventitiously blinded in Machakos District, Kenya. Despite the government's effort to provide free rehabilitation for persons with visual impairment, the socio-economic predicaments have not been identified and sufficiently addressed by researchers in Kenya. Thus, their integration into the societal fabric is wanting. The study sampled married women who are adventitiously blinded in Machakos District and how their becoming blinded affected them. The researcher first identified and sampled married women who were adventitiously blinded in Machakos District employing purposive sampling and snowball techniques. Purposive sampling was used in Machakos Rehabilitation Institute because it was reliable while snowball technique was used to identify married women who are adventitiously blinded who were not residing in the Rehabilitation Institute. Using both sampling techniques, 20 cases of adventitiously blinded married women were purposively selected to participate in the study from a target population of 50 married women who are adventitiously blinded. Data were collected through face-to-face structured interview schedules for the rehabilitees, institute personnels that are blinded and married women who are adventitiously blinded outside the institute. The results from the semi-structured interviews were manually coded and narrated. The structured interview method was preferred because the participants could not read printed materials. Data was analyzed thematically according to the objectives of the study. All the coded data under major themes of topics were assembled. The study concluded that married women who are adventitiously blinded suffered from lack of spousal companionship and assistance in domestic chores, societal negative attitude, marital tension, sexual deprivation and unproductivity in agriculture and socio-economic constraints as well as lack of access to educational information concerning them.*

Keywords: Awareness methods, attitude, blind, married women, Machakos

1. Introduction

Globally, although married men and women who are adventitiously blinded are subject to discrimination because of their disabilities, married women who are adventitiously blinded are at a further disadvantage because of the combined discrimination. This may be based on gender and disability. Such groups need support and assistance while undertaking the activities of daily living (ADL) and field work activities (Shepherd, 2001). The universal Declaration of Human Rights provided that no one should be subjected to torture or to cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, (Mbote 2000-1).

Shepherd (2001), postulates that the visual system can be considered as the dominant sensory modality in humans. In relation to this, there are also visual biases in the languages used by humans to describe the world (Shepherd, 2001). Tuttle & Tuttle (1996), suggest that notions of objecthood have traditionally been framed to visuocentric terminology.

The married women who are non-disabled experience challenges in their marriages but mostly affected are the married women who are adventitiously blinded. The latter experience hardships in adjustments and socialization. Because they do not see, they may be sexually discriminated against. Their domestic role may also be reduced as they try to cope with the new lifestyle due to sight loss (<http://www.wvda.org>). They may have stayed with the husband for a short or a long period.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory implies that a conducive environment must be created for work to be done. If the married women who are adventitiously blinded are not provided with enabling conditions to face life, they will suffer increased frustration, lower performance (both at home and workplace) and job dissatisfaction.

The purpose of this study was to investigate awareness methods used to provide positive attitude towards adventitiously blinded married women in Machakos district, Kenya. The study was aimed at assisting the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development in their programme development for married women who are adventitiously blinded. It also aimed at creating awareness within the Kenyan community of the plight of persons with disabilities and especially married women who are adventitiously blinded.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a Descriptive Survey Design to identify social challenges encountered by adventitiously blinded married women in Machakos District. This design is suitable to assess attitudes and opinions about events, individuals or procedures (Gay, 1992). It also involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of the study. The study was undertaken in Machakos District, Eastern Province of Kenya

due to presence of the Machakos Rehabilitation Institute for persons who are Visually Impaired within the district.

2.2 Target Population

The study targeted 50 married women who are adventitiously blinded in Machakos District.

2.3 Sampling Techniques

The study used purposive sampling to sample the married women who are adventitiously blinded from Machakos Rehabilitation Institute. The Snowball sampling technique was used to sample out the adventitiously blinded married women who were not in the Rehabilitation Institute. This method facilitated easier identification of women in similar circumstances (Orodho, 2005).

2.4 Sample Size

The study sample comprised 20 women who are adventitiously blinded. Ten were purposively sampled from the centre. Ten were obtained from outside the centre.

2.5 Data Collection tools and Procedures

Semi-structured interview schedule formed the research instrument. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the married women who are adventitiously blinded.

2.6 Data analysis

The collected data were categorized in relation to the objectives of the study. Key quotations were highlighted. All the coded materials under the major themes of topic were put together for summarization reports and conclusions were drawn. The data were then interpreted and generalization formulated (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999).

3. Results and Discussion

From the findings, 25% of the respondents were happily married, 25% were tolerating marriages while 50% of the respondents were separated. The findings of the study revealed that 6(50%) married women who are adventitiously blinded were deserted by their spouses as had been observed by Getui & Ayanga (2002).

The study also observed that when blindness occur after marriage men are more likely to divorce their wives who becomes adventitiously blinded as had been discussed by Fine and Asch, (1981). The study findings revealed that 3(25%) respondents said that the community within Machakos was aware of the married women who were adventitiously blinded.

One of the respondents had this to say; *The community around Machakos is aware of women who are adventitiously blinded since the Machakos Rehabilitation Institute organizes for white cane day with the District Commissioner's Office. It is an occasional event and all*

people in the town witness it (Personnel, No.1, Machakos Rehabilitation Institute interview, 31st Jan 2010).

It was further noted that 8(66.67%) respondents said that the community was not aware of persons who are visually impaired.

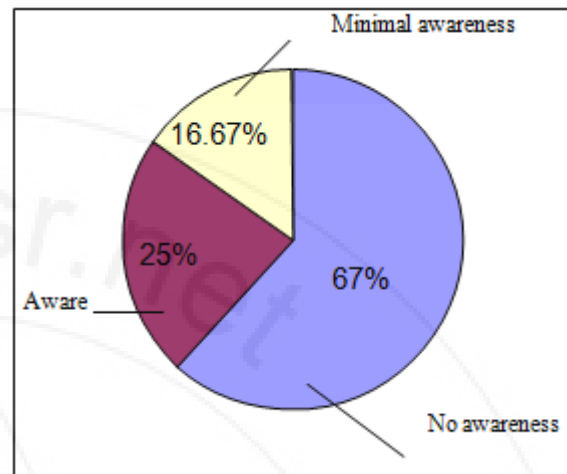


Figure 1: Community Awareness

Since 7(67%) had no awareness on married women who are adventitiously blinded, it would then be suggested from the study that Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) did not have well-laid strategies for improving service delivery as indicated by Okech (2003) that is prevention of diseases that may cause disability. This supported sentiments made by personnel (No.3) who claimed that local people within Machakos consumed local illicit brew that had caused people to lose their eyesight.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings reviewed that 7(66.67%) were not aware of adventitious blindness. They therefore did not know the causes and prevention of adventitious blindness. The respondents did not know their rights as married women who are adventitiously blinded. Those who were supposed to be working for these people like the Kenya Society for the Blind, Kenya Union for the Blind and women societies had done very little in integrating the married women who are adventitiously blinded.

It can be concluded from the findings that these married women who are adventitiously blinded suffer isolation, marginalization and discrimination when it comes to implementing their rights. A similar study should be replicated in other districts in Kenya where the adventitiously blinded married women are found.

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Authors Profile



Ndathe Wangari Rachel is currently pursuing her PhD in special needs education at Kenyatta University. She has obtained her Masters in Special needs education (visual impairment) and B.ED in special needs education (learning disabilities) from the same institution. Rachel has wide experience professionally having worked with Kenya Institute of Special Education as an examiner and a facilitator on special education. She has also worked with Kenya National Examination council, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and currently lecturing at three different universities (St. Paul's, Machakos and Maasai Mara) in Kenya.

Chege Gichuho Moses obtained Bsc. Fisheries and M.Sc. Environmental in 2005 and 2012 from Moi University, Kenya. He worked as a research assistant at Onyx Research Consultants in Kenya and has been a part time Environmental/GIS lecturer at DALC Cambridge College. He is currently an environmental/GIS consultant at the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).