

Persistent Challenges Facing People with Disability in Participation in Political Leadership in Busia County

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Abstract- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) affirms that ‘everyone has the right to take part in the government of own country, directly or through freely chosen representatives PWDs in Kenya included. It is on this basis that the United Nations Convention on PWDs recognized the need for inclusivity in political process as part of the issues for adoption. However, opening of opportunities are through legalization or pronouncements of various forms may not be enough assurance of implementation of the same. In Kenya, there are barriers hindering effective participation of PWDs in economic, social and political exclusion which deprive them equal right to enjoy like others. The purpose of the study was to investigate persistent challenges faced by people with disability in participation in political leadership in Busia County. The study targeted all PWDs registered as voters in Busia County that is visual impairment, physical impairment and hearing impairment and albinism. Also, Secretary Generals of 3 major political dominant political parties. It was established that the attitude of PWDs in participation in political leadership was poor with challenges posed by built environment, poor accessibility to information as well as huge financial demands for financing campaigns, a situation that disadvantaged majority of them making them to develop negative attitude in matters related to political leadership. With reforms initiated to promote rights of PWDs such as promotion in political leaders.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) affirms that ‘everyone has the right to take part in the government of own country, directly or through

freely chosen representatives PWDs in Kenya included. It is on this basis that the United Nations Convention on PWDs recognized the need for inclusivity in political process as part of the issues for adoption.

As signatory of international Conventions such as PWDs Kenya is under obligations to ensure full compliance to adoption and implantations of various international Conventions such as UNCPWDs. It is on this basis that various reforms have been initiated such as the promulgation of 2010 constitution that advocates for recognition of and addressing issues relating to marginalized groups such as PWDs in opportunities such as employment and appointment to various openings that may arise. For instance various political parties have normally had a waiver on registration fee for those who normally intend to run for various political seats. As such, one would expect PWDs to compete for various political positions as financial constraints such as registration fees is lessened.

However, opening of opportunities are through legalization or pronouncements of various forms may not be enough assurance of implementation of the same. Some barriers may arise hindering realization of the same. As part of ensuring effective implementation of inclusivity under UNCPWDs, the need for continuous monitoring was part of the key recommendations. Member states were required to have continuous monitoring mechanism in order to identify obstacles that could be facing effective implementation of participation of Persons with Disability in normal activities such as participation in election.

In Kenya, there are barriers hindering effective participation of PWDs in economic, social and

political exclusion which deprive them equal right to enjoy like others. This research was therefore carried out in order to further intervention to ensure fully implementation of measures that would see PWDs enjoy equal rights just as other people in the society. The purpose of the study was to investigate persistent challenges faced by people with disability in participation in political leadership in Busia County. The study targeted all PWDs registered as voters in Busia County that is visual impairment, physical impairment and hearing impairment and albinism. Also, Secretary Generals of 3 major political dominant political parties.

II. ATTITUDE OF PEOPLE TOWARDS PWDS AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

According to Beckman et al (1998) and Shields et al., (2012) negative attitudes in the community, experience of bullying, and safety concerns all serve to restrict the opportunities for a disabled person. These normally emerge from communal attitudes and is majorly deeply rooted in patterns of marginalization in society. The study sought to establish general attitude of people towards PWDs in comparison with people towards disability as regards to acceptance for assumption of political leadership in Busia County.

A positive statement stating that “despite various reforms that have taken place in the recent past, the level of acceptance of people with disability to assume political leadership is still low in comparison with people without disability” was first given to respondents without disability and scored.

From the responses it was established that majority of the respondents (85%) were in agreement with the statement as the minority (12%) were in dispute while 3% did not know. This meant that majority of respondents accepted that attitude of the general voters towards PWDs was still negative and as such were unlikely to vote for PWDs to assume political leadership, a situation that was likely to impact on participation of PWDs in seeking for political leadership. This is shown in the chart below:

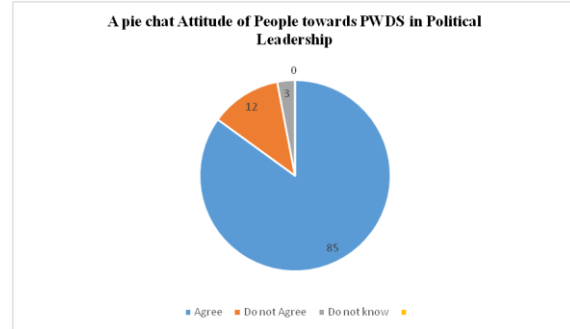


Figure 2.2: Attitude of People towards PWDS in Political Leadership

Affirming the same position, all General Secretaries of political parties were in agreement that general acceptability for PWDs to assume political leadership among general voters was still low. One secretary had observed that;

-----election is generally a process and is not a single time event. It involves a series of activities that entails a lot of movement and campaigns from one place to another. Movement to and from may prove a challenge not only in terms of accessibility but also in terms of time with huge financial implications. Some people may move from house to house even through the night, an issue that may prove to be challenging for PWDs. Such consideration of demands involved put off right away PWDs.

In an earlier study, in Ghana by Voice Ghana, (2014) disability was perceived as a product of witchcraft, a curse or punishment for sins committed by the individual or the family. These Socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes have led to PWDs being labelled with embarrassing names and several portrayals. The discernments generate barriers which accordingly lead to marginalization of PWDs in the political process (Sackey, 2014; Mensah et al., 2008).

III. ATTITUDE OF PEOPLE OF PWDS TOWARDS PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Ability to participate in certain activities such as political leadership beside other factors is driven by own interest (Heyer, 2002). This implies that participation of PWDs in political leadership such as voting, running for political seats and even undertaking of active role such as undertaking administrative duties is dependent on own interest

among PWDs. Therefore a PWDs will actively come out to seek for political leadership if one has a positive interest in political leadership. As such the study sought to establish prevailing attitude among PWDs towards political leadership.

The study sought information on three fronts, those one who were willing to seek for elective position, willing to take part in voting and those who were willing to take administrative duties in election. During FGDs and through show of hands, it was established that 3 out of 50 (6%) were willing to seek for elective seats, 11 (22%) to participate in voting and 17 (34%) to seek to undertake administrative duties in election. This is show below on table 2.1 and figure 2.3.

Table 2.1: Attitude of People of PWDs towards Participation in Political Leadership

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Willing	3	6
Willing to take part in voting	11	22
Take administrative duties	17	34
Do not participate in elections	29	38
Total	50	100

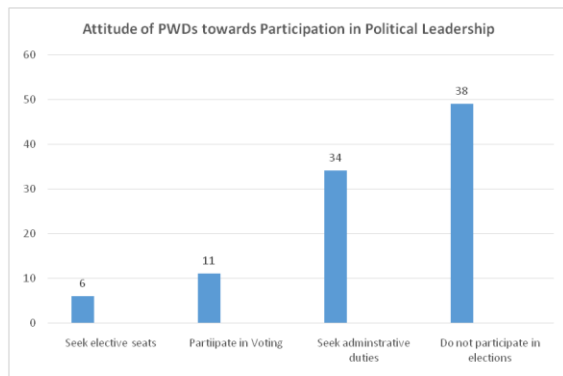


Figure 2.3: Attitude of PWDs towards Participation in Political Leadership

On the basis of the responses, it could be seen that the willingness of PWDs to participate in political leadership in any capacity that was under investigation was low. As such the study sought to establish social factors that led to the reason for the prevailing state for each variable. On elective

position, majority of respondents (over 90%) cited discrimination and violence related to elections as the main factors, on voting accessibility was cited as the main challenge (over 74%) of respondents while 60 percent cited conditions required on appointment such as level of education as the main challenge.

During FGDs Mno 027 made the following observation on participation of PWDs in political leadership;

-----it is good that the government has made some initiative to recognize challenges we people face, a situation that has resulted in opening up space for us though, legislative process on inclusivity. However, it is obvious that we are still at disadvantaged position. We cannot favorably compete for elective posts with other people. The only way is for the government to do more legislation and ensure that beside nomination slots reserved for us, elective seats are just reserved for us to compete against ourselves just like we have the seat reserved for Women Representative in Parliament.

On the basis of the responses, it could be reasonably concluded that the attitude of PWDs on participation in political leadership was generally low, a problem attributed to other social problems in the environment such as feeling of continuity in discrimination, violence and accessibility.

These findings concur with findings in earlier studies. It was established that the influence of discrimination on the exclusion of disabled people is twofold. At one level discrimination can lead to intimidation and its related psycho-social consequences Secondly, intimidation can promote segregation by generating fear and apprehension that hampers disabled people from partaking in the communal activities (Peace 2001).The PWD occasionally have nasty experiences with discrimination and in reaction carry fears and apprehension about the broader society. The deleterious social dealings that take place can promote a sense of communal hostility, making the experience of the area to be powerful deterrent to go to it (Milner et al 2004).

IV. PREVAILING LEVEL OF LITERACY AMONG PWDS.

A positive statement postulating that “PWDs are more likely to have challenges of access to education in comparison to people without disability” was first put to respondents without disability. All respondents (100%) were in agreement with this statement. This means that PWDs still stand in position of disadvantage in competing for certain opportunities in comparison with their counterparts, a situation that puts them in weaker position in competing for political leadership.

Similarly, all PWDs (100%) were also in agreement during FDGs that had challenges accessing education opportunities in comparison with their counterparts. First Participants in all FDGs acknowledged the importance that formal education plays in politics, and agreed that their level of education was a major factor limiting their chance to participate in political activities. Many of the participants mentioned that they were unable to attain higher education because the education system in the country was not accessible to persons with disabilities. Their views were best summarized by PWD No 028, a visually impaired participant during FDGs who had this to say;

---I know that our level of education is low that is why the government does not consider us during political appointments. Look, in Kenya there are few government schools for the blind and it is only few private individuals who have vocational schools which are very expensive to attend. Even if you attend such schools, that is the end and no university or polytechnic will give you admission. We have limited access to education and that is our main problem.

In an earlier study, Hillygus (2005) established linkage between formal educations to political engagement. The author established ‘that education provides both the skills necessary to become politically engaged and the knowledge to understand and accept democratic principles. This means that a person with lesser level of education is unlikely to effectively participate in political leadership.

In another study, Selina (2021) found that amenities in public TVET institutions lacked basic support to promote accessibility to training opportunities for PWDs. The study found that majority of institutions lacked ramps for facilitation of easy movement for PWDs. The study further found that there was no institution with well-designed smooth pathways and only one institution had special lavatory meant for PWDs. The study concluded that TVET institutions ability to enhance access to education put PWDs in disadvantaged position in competing for opportunities that accrue on access to education.

V. THE PREVAILING STATE OF COST OF FINANCING ELECTION

The study sought to establish the prevailing cost of election financing in comparison with the previous state considering that the cost of election was one of the issues that had put off most PWDs from participating in election. The cost of election entails all direct and indirect costs that come in form of advertisement, cost of travelling, agents and other related expenses, existence of organizations to support PWDs to pursue their political interests.

An item in the questionnaire postulating that “The cost of financing election has been increasing with passage of time” was put to respondents without disability and scored. The results reveals that all (100%) respondents were in agreement that the cost of financing election has been increasing with passage of time. This position was affirmed by all General Secretaries of political parties (100%). The increase in cost of election presents more challenges for PWDs considering that even previously when such costs were relatively lower, PWDs faced challenges participating due to their inability to meet the same. As such further increase in cost of financing worsens the situation further (Adhikari, 2015).

A study on the cost of politics in Ghana revealed return to multi-party democracy in 1992, the cost of elections has been on upward trajectory. For instance between 2012 and 2016, the cost of running for political office increased by 59% with a candidate expenditure of approximately US\$ 85,000 required to finance election from party primaries to the

parliamentary election(Asante, et al. 2018). A similar study in Uganda expenditure of ranges from US\$ 43,000- 143,000 in 2016 (Kanyamurwa, &Obosi, 2020) while in Kenya, the Senate seat is the most expensive of all the posts to contest for with its cost running at an average of Kshs. 35.5 million (US\$ 350,000) in 2017, Woman Representative seat Kshs. 22.8 million (US\$ 228,000), members of parliament Kshs. 18.2 million (US\$ 182,000), and County Assembly (MCA) Kshs. 3.1 million (US\$ 31,000) (Kanyinga, 2021).

VI. THE PREVAILING STATE OF ACCESS TO JOB OPPORTUNITIES BY PWDs

Economic empowerment in form of job opportunities be it formal or informal is critical in promotion of ones' financial empowerment, a critical component in promotion of development of ones' financial muscle (Balibar, 2005). As such the study sought to establish views of respondents on access to job opportunities by PWDs. A positive statement stating that "Majority of people with disability still have a challenge accessing job opportunities" given to people without disability scored revealed that majority of the respondents(over 85%) were in agreement that PWDs have still have challenges accessing job opportunities.

As if to confirm this position, all General Secretaries of political parties interviewed affirmed that access to job opportunities for PWDs was still a big challenge accessing job opportunities. One Secretary observed

-----access to job opportunities for PWDs may not improve any time soon due to their challenge in accessing education opportunities. The cost of enabling a PWD to access education opportunity is extremely high, making difficult it for majority of families to afford the same. As such PWDs are likely to continue missing out on education opportunities unless proper intervention measures are undertaken by the government to support their education.

Based on the above findings, it can be reasonably concluded that access to job opportunities for PWDs continue being a challenge to PWDs, a situation that has likely made majority of them miss out on job opportunities that could have empowered them to

participate in competing for various political leadership positions.

VII. EXISTENCE OF ORGANIZATION TO SUPPORT PWDs TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Various organization can support PWDs to participate in political activities either by offering civic education or financial support. As such the study sought to establish from PWDs whether there were any organizations that were offering civic education or financial support to PWDs to participate political matters. For instance Mobility International USA (MIUSA) has been reducing the opening between the humanitarian communities and disability by enhancing the leadership capability in the disability community, more so among women with disabilities Dunn &Sygall (2014).An investigation of MIUSA's international network among 176 disabled women leaders in 2012 revealed that MIUSA graduates were influential and mainly unexploited resource for the philanthropic sector. A key approach for stimulating disability inclusion, involved building leadership ability within the disability society with a precise focus on the liberation of women with disabilities (ibid).

Therefore the study sought to establish whether there are similar empowerment programs in Kenya. From responses of PWDs, during FGDs, it was established that there were some groups that educated PWDs about their rights including participation in political activities. However, the education mainly occurred among registered members with concertation majorly being in urban areas, leaving majority of people in rural areas out, and denying them critical information required for decision making. However, all members (100%) were in agreement that there was no organization that was supporting PWDs financially to as a way of promoting their participation in political leadership.

From the above finding it can be reasonably be concluded that people with disability particularly those in rural areas were not benefiting from empowerment programs, denying them critical information on empowerment, which end up disadvantaging them when it comes to decision

making on matters such as involvement in political matters (Binder, & Willis, 1991).

This part of the study endeavored to establish the reasons why despite reforms initiated to open up opportunities for PWDs to participate in political activities through various Conventions and legislative reforms PWDs continue to fail to come up in large numbers to seize opportunity created by taking an active role in participation of political leadership process. The study established that despite various reforms initiated, PWDs to face other obstacles hampering their participation that the legislative and earlier reforms could not necessarily address. It was established that social barriers as reflected by the attitude of both PWDs and people without disabilities on matters related to participation of PWDs more so in political leadership was still low (Bol&Verthé, 2019). The exclusion was promoted by low level of education among PWDs that made majority of them to fail to meet requirements for minimum level of education required for assumption of certain positions. It was further established that financial demands required to finance election was a major obstacle for PWDs, a situation that was mainly traced to low level of education that majorly put off PWDs from engaging in economic empowerment opportunities. Though there were some organization that were engaged in empowerment of PWDs, such organization mainly concentrated on education excluding financial assistance. Similarly, their presence was majorly concentrated in urban areas, excluding majority of them who stay in rural areas.

VIII. PERSISTENT DIFFICULTIES AFFECTING PEOPLE WHO ARE DISABLED IN THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

UNDP is presently preparing a guide for practitioners to promote inclusive political processes and public participation in response to these problems (Chepkoech, 2021). Through engagement with Disabled Persons Organizations, policymakers, and disability specialists working on legal capacity reform and supported decision-making arrangements for participation in political and public life, we aim to discover worldwide best practices. This study, which was supported by a grant from the United Nations

Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, will be published in the spring of 2020.

8.1 Attitudinal obstacles

Culture, perception stigma and prejudice. People with impairments are seen differently by society, and their skills are underestimated. Additionally, they are regularly categorized and given labels they do not merit. Involvement is also hindered by a lack of participation in mainstream media discourse; hence, disability does not become a priority. The political landscape is also devoid of chances for people with disabilities due to the misconception that they are not visible, therefore political parties depend on a small number of people with disabilities (Harpur, 2012). People with disabilities have poor life skill competencies; hence, the majority do not engage owing to social beliefs that prevent them from contributing. Another important aspect is the lack of knowledge among disabled individuals, which contributes to the problem.

8.2 Environmental barriers

This pertains to physical accessibility. This is a regular occurrence in political places, where we undertake political activities, campaign venues, and across the majority of the built environment. This risk might lead to instability and violence (Heyer, 2002). It has been shown that when political forums are held in certain places, they get violent, preventing people with disabilities from attending.

8.3 Communication obstacle

This affects all Kenyans with sensory and cognitive impairments for whose resources are not available in other forms. Bol&Verthé (2019) says that communication materials are situated in an inaccessible location. For instance, people with low statures cannot see posters that are too high.

8.4 Institutional obstacles

Jackson & Darrow (2005) says that these are the policies affecting those with impairments. For example, the new political act 2021 does not describe how coalition relationships impact individuals with impairments. Insufficient data on people with impairments prevents stakeholders from planning.

8.5 Financial obstacle

This barrier hinders the engagement of people with impairments. Poverty levels among people with disabilities are a strong sign of their lack of participation (Heyer, 2002). In Kenya, people finance the majority of political parties despite the existence of political party money. Very costly economic resources are necessary for political operations such as campaigns.

IX. PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH IMPAIRMENTS IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

Genuine engagement of every individual in political processes is a pillar of democracy. Political participation is clearly rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which state that every individual has the right to equal participation in public affairs, the right to vote and be elected, and the right to access public service (Kabue&Mombo, 2011).

Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities (UNCRPD) outlines the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life without discrimination and on an equal footing with others, and calls on state parties to protect these rights (Kanyamurwa&Obosi, 2020). This is essential to combating exclusion and inequality and ensuring that no one is left behind.

To exercise their rights, however, people with intellectual or psychosocial impairments face many legal, institutional, communicational, and social impediments, which hinder them from voting, running for public office, participating in civic activities, or even having a voice in their own lives. Their legal ability is often denied or limited on the basis of a physical condition or impairment, a perceived bad judgment, or a perception of insufficient decision-making abilities (Kołczyńska, 2020).

Due to constitutional or legal provisions that link their political rights to legal capacity, persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities continue to

be denied the right to vote and be elected, according to a 2011 UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights study involving more than 64 countries. Even when there are no legal restrictions, various impediments, such as attitudes based on biases and/or physical and communication inaccessibility, and the absence of supported decision-making policies and programs, make it very difficult to exercise these rights. These obstacles are compounded for historically oppressed populations, such as disabled women. Similarly, 62% of respondents to a 2014 Inclusion International poll reported that social and cultural limitations impede their political engagement.

In his December 2017 report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities addressed the issue of legal capacity affecting persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities and recommended that States "take immediate measures to reform their legal framework in order to ensure the right to legal capacity of all persons with disabilities" and permit reform processes that enable the establishment of supported decision-making. In addition, the Special Rapporteur stressed the need for more research and qualitative and quantitative data on legal capacity reform procedures and supported decision-making arrangements, as they would be beneficial to existing and future efforts (Khan, 2018). She suggested that "the United Nations, including all of its programs, funds, and specialized agencies, should increase the knowledge and expertise of its staff regarding the right to legal capacity of persons with disabilities" and increase funding for "the design and development of supported decision-making initiatives:".

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Merry (2006) says that we want to utilize this side event to hear directly from the community of individuals with intellectual and psychosocial impairments and to collaboratively identify best practices in the areas of legal capacity change, policy and institutional reform processes, and assisted decision-making arrangements (.On this vital subject, the UNDP is pleased to collaborate with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations, and Inclusion International.

X. DISABILITY AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN RELATION TO THE BARRIERS TO ELECTED OFFICE

Approximately one-sixth of the Kenyan population is handicapped, however there are few disabled politicians who identify as such. Despite academic and political interest in the underrepresentation of numerous socioeconomic groups, handicapped individuals have received little attention. This article identifies and analyzes the challenges to public office encountered by handicapped individuals in the United Kingdom, based on interviews with 51 candidates and elected officials (Mbibeh, 2013). It identifies obstacles that arise throughout the political recruiting process, from first involvement through selection and election campaigning. They generally fall into the following categories: (a) a lack of accessibility, which includes the built environment and documents; (b) a lack of resources to make events and activities accessible; and (c) ableism, which includes not only openly expressed prejudices but also a lack of awareness and willingness to make processes inclusive. While persons with various disabilities confront varied difficulties, they all suffer comparable obstacles and exclusion that are worse than those experienced by other underrepresented groups pursuing political office.

From the data, handicapped individuals are a diverse but sizable social group, however a detailed examination of our legislative legislatures finds few disabled lawmakers. While disabilities are sometimes 'invisible' or 'hidden,' and those seeking elected office may be reluctant to disclose them, all available statistics and estimates indicate that the proportion of

disabled politicians lags far behind the approximate percentage of disabled people in Britain, which is approximately 20%. Examining the experiences of handicapped candidates and elected politicians in the United Kingdom, this article discusses the barriers to political representation encountered by disabled persons. It identifies obstacles that arise throughout the political recruiting process, from first involvement through selection and election campaigning. These difficulties have been divided into three categories: accessibility, resources, and ableism.

Nzomo (1997) says that, according to the 2010 UK Equality Act, a person is handicapped if they have a "substantial and long-term detrimental impact on their ability to carry out routine day-to-day activities due to a physical or mental disability." The disability rights movement has long acknowledged the marginalisation of disabled people in positions of power, arguing that they must be directly involved in political processes where decisions affecting their lives are made (Maroto and Pettinicchio, 2014; Prince, 2009) – as reflected by the slogan "nothing about us without us" (Charlton, 1998). The significance of equitable access, participation, and representation is echoed by democratic theorists, who see increasing political involvement as a prerequisite for a well-functioning representative democracy (Phillips, 1995; Powell and Powell, 2000; Przeworski et al., 1999). In fact, the underrepresentation of social groups may indicate that they lack access equity (Mansbridge, 1999).

Extensive study has been conducted on the numerical or descriptive underrepresentation of social groups in politics, with a primary emphasis on women (e.g. Norris, 1985) and ethnic minorities (e.g. Bird, 2005). With a few noteworthy exceptions (D'Aubin and Stienstra, 2004; Langford and Levesque, 2017; Levesque, 2016; Sackey, 2015; Waltz and Schippers, 2020), academic examination of the challenges to political office for handicapped individuals has been scarce. Neither political parties, legislatures, nor administrations have shown much interest in increasing the number of handicapped lawmakers. Our research intends to shed additional light on the experiences of handicapped persons pursuing public office, utilizing the United Kingdom as a case study

to create global insights that might drive future research and policy.

To analyze the hurdles handicapped persons confront throughout the political recruiting process, 51 disabled politicians, candidates, and those who have considered running for national or municipal office were interviewed. Physical and learning challenges, chronic health disorders, and mental health issues are all represented in our sample. Our results indicate that although handicapped individuals encounter many of the challenges highlighted in studies on women and ethnic minority candidates (e.g. Norris and Lovenduski, 1995), they also confront a unique set of additional impediments. These have been classified as pertaining to: (a) accessibility; (b) resources; and (c) ableism. 4 While the exact effect of the obstacles varies depending on the form of the impairment(s), all respondents faced challenges that non-disabled persons do not often encounter, and many barriers were encountered by people with all types of impairments.

This research adds to continuing discussions about political recruiting procedures, particularly the role of political parties as gatekeepers and the cultural and institutional norms that impact the selection and election processes (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Kenny and Verge, 2016). Additionally, it contributes to the broad collection of research on the underrepresentation of social groups in our political institutions (e.g. Celis et al., 2014; Giger et al., 2012). In addition, our results may be valuable for governments and political parties when (re)designing procedures and policies to increase handicapped people's access to elected office and, therefore, their capacity to fully engage in society's formation.

Scholars have found many variables that explain why some groups in society stay under-represented in politics while others remain over-represented, all of which are rooted in gendered and racialized cultural and institutional power norms (Bjarnegrd, 2013; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). The majority of research on obstacles to elected office focuses on the relationship between supply-side and demand-side elements that define the political recruiting process (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). Political parties often assert that they are unable to recruit candidates from

under-represented communities because these individuals do not volunteer (supply). Nevertheless, there is evidence that applicants from under-represented groups are not chosen owing to different types of discrimination (demand) (Kittilson, 2006). In reality, barriers to elected office are typically the result of an interaction between supply and demand (Lovenduski, 2016), such as attitudes and perceptions; time constraints, such as caregiving responsibilities; financial costs; institutional norms; the culture and style of politics; a lack of support networks; and lower levels of political experience and ambition (Hazan and Rahat, 2010; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995).

In contrast, virtually little study has been conducted on handicapped political candidates and legislators. A recent research by Waltz and Schippers (2020) based on interviews with nine handicapped politicians from four European nations and Sackey's (2015) study of disability organizations and non-disabled local government officials in Ghana are two of the few exceptions. Furthermore, a handful of Canadian studies have focused on disabled people in elected office, such as Langford and Levesque's (2017) analysis of interviews with three disabled candidates and elected office holders in British Columbia; D'Aubin and Stienstra's (2004) discussion of disabled candidates and elected politicians; Levesque's (2016) analysis of disabled candidates in provincial elections in Canada; and Michael Prince's (2009) study of disability and the policy-making process.

These studies identify the following main categories of barriers that disabled candidates face: inaccessibility of the built environment and written material, which makes attending events and door-knocking more difficult; lack of financial resources and provision of support, such as sign language interpreters, specialized equipment, and carers; and stigmatisation and negative public perceptions of people's abilities. Yet, Langford and Levesque note that public impressions are not always negative: their respondents believed that being handicapped made them more recognized and might be seen as "contributing favorably to their life experience" (Langford and Levesque, 2017: 12).

Several studies (D'Aubin and Stienstra, 2004; Langford and Levesque, 2017; Levesque, 2016) also discuss the lack of disabled 'role models' in politics as a barrier, echoing the larger argument that the presence of under-represented social groups can have symbolic value and increase engagement among group members (cf. Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1995). Moreover, Sackey (2015) believes that lower education levels among handicapped people may impede them from obtaining elected office, whilst Waltz and Schippers (2020) emphasize that disabled individuals do not always have access to critical networks, such as those inside prestigious colleges. While there seems to be some overlap between the problems handicapped individuals and other under-represented groups encounter in the recruiting process, there are also a number of distinct hurdles. Through interviews with a varied sample of handicapped persons in the United Kingdom, our research aims to provide systematic evidence to this crucial but still limited body of information.

CONCLUSION

It was established that the attitude of PWDs in participation in political leadership was poor with challenges posed by built environment, poor accessibility to information as well as huge financial demands for financing campaigns, a situation that disadvantaged majority of them making them to develop negative attitude in matters related to political leadership. With reforms initiated to promote rights of PWDs such as promotion in political leaders.

On the basis of the responses, it could be seen that the willingness of PWDs to participate in political leadership in any capacity that was under investigation was low. As such the study sought to establish social factors that led to the reason for the prevailing state for each variable. On elective position, majority of respondents (over 90%) cited discrimination and violence related to elections as the main factors, on voting accessibility was cited as the main challenge (over 74%) of respondents while 60 percent cited conditions required on appointment such as level of education as the main challenge.

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