

NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION IN NIGERIA

Garba Bala Nata'ala

Abstract

Community based rehabilitation is a new development in the concept of rehabilitation services within the field of special education. It is an effort to bring or normalize the lost liability or capability to person with some handicapping condition with the use of the family, association, organizations as well as the community at large. The main goal of the programme is to make the client to realize his abilities within his disability and become self-independent and contribute to the development of his community. The paper outlined the needs and problems of community based rehabilitation in Nigeria. The writer believes that, proper implementation of the programme will greatly reduce the problem of street begging, unemployment and gangsterism.

Introduction

Rehabilitation is a process of restoring the lost ability with the view of helping people with disabilities to function well in the community. Rehabilitation services are needed by all most all categories of special needs persons in Nigeria. The services can be rendered in terms of medical, psychological, educational, vocational and social aspect. However, community based rehabilitation according to Ozoji (2003), refers to the use of simplified methods of rehabilitation and the promotion of awareness and responsibility for rehabilitation in the family and the whole community. He perceives it as a strategy for improving service delivery, for providing more equitable opportunities and for promoting and protecting human rights of the disabled (special needs).

Needs for Community Based Rehabilitation

The needs for community based rehabilitation can be vividly seen from its objectives. The objectives include discouraging street begging by assisting people with disabilities to become economically self-sufficient and respectable members of the community. It also attempts to place them properly on job training available within the community.

Community based rehabilitation is needed in Nigeria because it promotes community involvement in the rehabilitation of people with disabilities and gives the clients suitable training on areas where jobs are available within the community, so that the client can be trained and remain within the community. Hence, community based rehabilitation provides training on trades that can be easily established for self-employment with low cost of training since it is less formal with simplicity in its operation. However, community based rehabilitation is the best approach to inclusion and social integration which makes the best use of scarce resources reasonably and which promotes respect and community acceptance to the client (Ozoji, 2003).

' Community based rehabilitation programme is cheaper in terms of implementation because it involves the community participation in the management of the programme. Community members are trained to attend to the need of people with disabilities (Michael, 2001).

Another area of need can be seen in the broadness of the programme for it allows a large number of people to participate in the rehabilitation programme with less difficulties and it discourages negative attitudes towards the client. It also helps the client to realize his abilities within his disability during and after the training. Community based rehabilitation helps people with disabilities to get gainful employment or set up their businesses, thereby helping themselves, their families and the community at large. The community demand for C.B.R. can be justified in its dynamic nature because it has a generic approach, for it reflects all activities ranging from medical, educational, psychological and vocational services, specially tailored to meet the need of either person with disabilities or those who are having problems due to certain circumstances.

It could be recalled that before the introduction of C.B.R. people with disabilities were receiving services in special institutions most of them residential in nature. However, the present trend de-emphasizes residential institution models and advocates for C.B.R. Hence, the education or training given in residential institution is costly and segregates people with disabilities out of circulation in their

communities and most of the skills acquired have no relevance to the community. Na'ta'ala (2002), also believed that, the training received by the client in residential rehabilitation has no relation with the needs of the community labour market.

Unlike the old trend, C.B.R. introduce family and community sensitization programmes. Here, the family and the community receive information about the skills learnt by the rehabilitees. This forum serves as a blockage against all forms of negative attitudes toward people with disabilities. The intervention of Parent Associations and other professional bodies as well as organizations is another remarkable charge in C. B. R. programme. In fact, C.B.R. provides opportunity to the client to be apprenticed to a professional within the community for training in skills such as shoemaking and repairing, soap making, basket weaving, leather designing, printing, carpentry, bricklaying, book binding, tailoring, barbing and so on. This will help the client to become gainfully employed within the immediate environment. Ajobiewe (1996) believed that, it is a new development in the concept of rehabilitation in Nigeria. However, it is estimated that there are about ten million (10,000,000) people in Nigeria with disability in one form or another (AMWE, 1991). This is a great problem for the government to contend with, hence, community based rehabilitation becomes a necessity.

Problems of Community Based Rehabilitation

Even though, community based rehabilitation is accepted more than the residential, it still has some problems. Among the serious problems, the programme is facing in Nigeria includes people's attitudes of wait-and see. C.B.R. being a new trend is misunderstood as a waste of time and resources.

Lack of enough human resources because, many professionals are needed for its proper implementation more especially in the area of health, welfare, education and rehabilitation. There is also lack of proper funding which leads to inadequate materials and equipment. Hence, lack of legislation to protect the interest and well being of people with disabilities is another problem. Protecting them in terms of intimidation, misplacement and exploitation. Proper co-ordination is also lacking since there is no co-ordination between local, state and federal government. In fact, no reliable bodies, committees to monitor the operation of C.B.R. in Nigeria (Michael, 2001). Another problem include poor organization of services due to lack of efficient supervisors and co-ordinators couple with the problem of transportation for most rural areas lack access roads to ease movement. Meanwhile, lack of interest from client constitute the greatest problem for they use to ran away for beginning.

Kolo and Isa (1995), listed the following problems of community based rehabilitation in Nigeria:

- Misconception of the principle of community based rehabilitation since most field practitioners of rehabilitations are either not qualified professionals or they are not abreast with the current practical realities of the programme and this leads them to resort to ill-conceived plans for programme implementation.
- Lack of effective political will and financial commitment by government as well as attitudinal barriers, which pose serious problems for the expected levels of acceptance of the programme to be floated.
- Lack of any serious rehabilitation programme in Nigeria capable of making appreciable impact.

Recommendations

- 1) State governors and local government chairman should appoint advisers on people with disabilities under whose office all people with disabilities-are to be registered and cared for.
- 2) Non-governmental organizations, community members in conjunction with the above offices should send people with disabilities to a new by occupational centres for training in various skills and take all the financial burden.
- 3) Traditional rulers, religious leaders, NGOs, government and community members should create ways of giving them some places of business as well as revolving loan after they acquired the skill.
- 4) The programme should be on continual basis and on different skills, so that people with disabilities will be self-reliant and self-independent.
- 5) The community must be enlightened about the benefit of the community based rehabilitation programme.

Conclusion

With all the above problems and needs of community based rehabilitation, there is every hope that, the present political dispensation might give greater attention to the programme at federal, state and local government levels. Governments have now realized that, people with disabilities can acquire functional rehabilitation skills in all its ramifications within the community. Unlike in the past, we now have many trained counselors, special educationists and other professionals needed to make the programme a success. Hence, the proliferation of professionals and voluntary organizations concerned with the rights, privileges and total progress of people with disabilities serves as a signal for the greater acceptance and effective implementation of community based rehabilitation in Nigeria.

References

- Ajobiwe, T. A. (1996). Community based vocational rehabilitation (CBVR) in practice: An appraisal of Ibadan pilot scheme. *Journal of Research in Special Education*. Volume 1 Number 1, Page 38-44. Jos: Deka Publication.
- Amwe, D. O. (1991). Rehabilitating the disabled in Africa. Unpublished Manuscript, University of Jos, Jos. Kolo, I. A.-and Jibrin, I. (1995). Salient factors for consideration in planning urban focused C.B.R. in Nigeria. In E. O. Ozoji and I. A. Nwazu Oke (Eds.), *Professionalism in Special Education in Nigeria*. Jos: NCEC.
- Michael, O. O. (200 \). *Elements of special education and rehabilitation*. Jos: Deka Publication.
- Na-ta'ala, G. B. (2002). Community based rehabilitation. A handout for advanced diploma in community development. F.C.E., Kano.
- Ozoji, E. D. (2003). *Special education for beginner professionals*. Jos: Deka Publication.