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## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSIVENESS OF PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED: A SURVEY OF SELECTED SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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### **Abstract:**

*The question of zero reject has come to stay to ensure the integration of specially challenged persons into the society. This paper investigates the inclusiveness of specially challenged persons into the entrepreneurship economic activities in the Rivers State, Nigeria. The youths have taken to crimes, ranging from cyber-crime, cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, prostitution, drug paddling and others. Companies in discharging their social responsibilities are expected to include the physically challenged youths in their entrepreneurship programmes. The physically challenged youths are unarguably not fit to be engage in certain economic activities not because they are not fit but because they are not specially trained to fit into such jobs and are therefore stigmatized. The paper is anchored on “Social inclusion Theory”. Information was sought from newspaper publications, journal articles and statistical bulletins. Descriptive statistics such as mean, average and frequency distribution were used to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics of both skilled and non-skilled economic activities of disable persons. In addition, student t-test and analysis of means techniques were employed to establish the difference between the income skilled and unskilled specially challenged persons. Result revealed that mean annual incomes of the disabled persons within the revealed period were statistically significant. Household of income of physically challenged that ventured into skilled economic activities increased. The paper recommended that the focus of initiating entrepreneurship development and inclusive education programmes should be geared towards the expansion of self-employment opportunities rather than wage-paid-casual employment. Government should put a law against stigmatization of physically challenged person and laws should be put in place to encourage zero rejection of qualified disabled persons from employments.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, socio-economics, inclusiveness, physically challenged, Special Needs Facilities.

## Introduction

The place of entrepreneurship has remained vital to the development of job creating opportunities and empowerment to youths and the general public. It is not out of place to find that empowered young men and women have continued to generate income and create further job opportunities others. What matters in every entrepreneurship programme is the deliverables from empowered beneficiaries. Both in Africa and other continents of the world, entrepreneurship development has remained a major contributor to the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The potentials of youths can easily be developed if skill opportunities are provided. Following the growth in world's population, the labour market is reducing to a breaking point where the ingenuity of youths are suppressed in the presence of agencies capable of harnessing the available hug potentials to bring out the best in the younger generation. Employment rate for the youths is on the increase every day without commensurate job opportunities (Cab Vade Technical Report, 2012). The challenges of youth employment are insurmountably mounting pressure on scare infrastructure while availability of government social responsibilities is becoming a nightmare. World Development research conducted by Haggblade, Peter, Hazell & Thomas (2015) observed that non-farm entrepreneurship development employed 51 per cent of the young men and women in Asia, Latin America 47 per cent and Namibia 75 percent. The study further found out that the highest income generating households were China 39 per cent in 1997, India 46 per cent in 2000, Japan 84 per cent in 1987, South Korea 46 per cent in 1991, Taiwan 78 per cent in 1987 and Thailand 46 per cent in

1986. It reflected the employment of youths trice more than other age groups in these countries. These achievements were propelled more by efforts of agencies that complimented government programmes. The programmes constituted small and medium enterprise which beneficiaries participated in their areas of interest. The expansion of non-farm entrepreneurship development

programme must come from a holistic approach towards empowering the desired group without recourse to fees and tuitions irrespective of who provides the acquisition programme, government or companies. In a locality where companies operate, social corporate responsibility is essential for smooth and unhindered operations.

Countries whose major population are mostly youngsters; it represents huge and richly untapped material and resource potentials. It is only realizable if the enabling environment is provided. Looking beyond formal education is a vital key to unlocking the wherewithal to develop these human assets. Options in career are vividly showcased through the provision of opportunities that exist in entrepreneurships for the realization of self-employment. Self-reliance are built and not pronounced. It is both conscientious and consistent effort by institutions that a nation can be found enjoying such benefits. Sustained entrepreneurship structure is a programme that must be pursued without bias. The millennium Development Goal (MDGs) is not attainable without addressing youth problems by taking them out of the streets. In this vain, the recognition of the importance of peaceful political and economic environment is looking beyond the goals of MDGs by initiating an all-inclusive and new development agenda that embraces the teeming unemployed youths who are willing to contribute to economic growth (Mukhopadhyay, Gangopadhyay & Saswati, 2008). As a global menace, youth unemployment is substantially gaining prominence that seems not solutions coming in the near future due to upsurge in birth rate mostly in Africa. Ayyagari & Beckand, (2007) observed that about two million unemployed youths are unemployed in

developed economies with North Africa and Middle East standing at a share of 23.7 per cent and 28.3 per cent respectively.

The excruciating pains of not securing paid job after schooling is felt more in the developing countries where no social allowance is paid to unemployed youths. This has created a monster behavior mostly among the educated. In this regard, the global crisis in the world developing economies has forced about 510 million youths into informal employment with more increasing hopeless job seekers in Africa. Beck & Peria (2011), referencing “the suicide of 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian street trader who faced harassment by municipal officials, in January 2011” which triggered widespread outrage leading to the riots and demonstrations of the Tunisian Revolution,” pointed out that it was frustration induced due to unemployment. The trauma, frustration, hunger and starvation experiences of unemployed youth are capable of orchestrating global upheaval. The understanding that youths are leaders of tomorrow is gradually fading into oblivion due to lack of gainful employment. It is more expensive to control unemployed situation mostly where the youths have taken to arms. The multiplier effects in terms of damage are unquantifiable as poverty and violence are never the least outcome. World Bank, (2009) observed that “about 80. per cent of the population in Ethiopia, Burundi, Nigeria, Zambia and so on,” face severe poverty where hunger and starvation have gone beyond the borderline. Special needs person abound with attention needed to inclusively admit that the physically challenged are important in the society. Their attention must be captured through the provision of their learning facilities (Adefila & Madaki, 2014). Zero inclusiveness is needed to accommodate these persons in the informal sector start-ups in the society. In Nigeria, the fragile economy which has summersaulted into recession in 2016 impairs the ability of the youths to develop potentials by themselves without recourse to government assistance especially where there is no collaboration among stakeholders. If the cost of employment is higher, then it is more expensive to combat unemployment mostly in an area as volatile as Niger Delta. Federal government of Nigeria at several times have initiated empowerment programs to create an enabling entrepreneurship opportunities for the youths (Nwanyanwu, Amadi & Njoku, 2016). Towards increasing career potential of the youths, Federal government of Nigeria in 2001 established the “National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) which replaced the “Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP). In furtherance, “Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) was initialed in 2003 with the aim of promoting “Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises”. Again, in 2016, an empowerment programme code named N-Power targeted at job creation and potentials development in “construction, agriculture, technology and artisanal skills,” was also introduced by the federal government. All was for the youths to acquire skills that will propel them from unemployment to employment generation.

### **Statement of Problem**

In Rivers State, in the past, has replicated various federal government entrepreneurship and empowerment programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, National Fadama Development Programm and others in an effort to further replicated federal government entrepreneurship programmes. Obviously, these numerous programmes failed to include the physically challenges in the teaming unemployment crisis, hunger, food scarcity and inflationary pressures in Nigeria. The physical challenged must be educated to be able to fit into informal sector start-up participations in the society. The youths have taken to crimes, ranging from cyber-crime, cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, prostitution, drug paddling and others. Companies in discharging their social responsibilities are expected to include the physically challenged youths in their entrepreneurship programmes. The

physically challenged youths are unarguably not fit to be engage in certain economic activities not because they are not fit but because they are not specially trained to fit into such jobs and are therefore stigmatized. The question raised is whether the government and other organizations have been able to include the physically challenged in their youth empowerment scheme and how well have the physically challenged been inclusively as a zero reject involved in the socio-economic activities to better their lives.

It behooves this study to find out the extent of engagement of the physically challenged youths by companies in Rivers State on non-farm economic programmes and activities as sources of self-employment and income generation. The question seeking answers is “what roles have companies operating in Rivers State played towards assisting the state government in the development of entrepreneurial skills among the youths. In a bid to answer this question, this paper seeks to find the contributions of operating companies to non-farm entrepreneurship development in Rivers State.

### **Objectives of Study**

This paper investigates “non-farm entrepreneurship and economic inclusiveness of physically challenged persons by companies in rivers state”. Specific objectives are to;

- (i) Investigate the demographic characteristics of beneficiaries special needs programmes in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (ii) Examined the level of physical disability in among disabled persons in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (iii) Identify the extent of entrepreneurship inclusiveness of persons with physical disability in Rivers State, Nigeria

### **Study Hypotheses**

Objectives shall be clarified by the testing the following hypotheses;

H01: there is no significant difference in the number of persons with physical disability and those without disability in Rivers State.

Ho2: There no significant relationship between income of physically disabled persons and non- disabled persons in selected Local Government Areas in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Findings from this study shall be of immense benefit to researchers, policy makers, government and others.

Researchers: findings from this work will add to the frontier of knowledge on the impact of special needs education in Rivers State.

Policy makers: results will form a template for guiding the policy decisions of government and corporate organizations on special needs education in Rivers State. It will establish the evidence on the availability and utilization of special needs facilities in selected special schools in Rivers State, thereby equipping the government and ministry of education with the necessary information that will enable them to provide some lacking special needs facilities to enhance better academic performance of students across board. The findings will expose the effect of lack of special needs facilities so that all stakeholders in education will seek means of increasing special needs facilities for the betterment of the students.

On the basis of the findings, teachers will tailor their teachings towards using appropriate special needs facilities to enhance better learning and better academic performance. The finding will also expose effect of poor utilization of available special needs facilities can have, enabling special schools administrators to seek means of effective utilization of existing special needs facilities so as to improve teaching and learning as well as students' general academic performance. Government will also benefit from this study as it will reveal to them on the extent of availability of special needs facilities to schools in Rivers State. It contributes to the volume of existing literature on similar studies that bordered on special needs education in Rivers State.

### **Expected Results**

This paper intends to reveal the performance of physically challenged persons compared to their counterparts/beneficiaries of skilled entrepreneurship programmes of special education centres in rivers state. It shall also reveal the sustainability of physically challenged households through their participation in the skilled entrepreneurship economic activities.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Conceptual Framework**

Special needs: use of the work "special needs" outstanding requirement. It cuts across human and material resources that can be advantaged to aid the educational teaching of children with disabilities such as infrastructure, counselors, sign teacher, wheelchairs, clutches, and rams for the physically impaired, medicated glasses, rails, elevators, white cane, trained guide dogs, sonic guide, Mowat censor, laser cain, Russel path sounder. Special instructional facilities included the following; braille machine, talking calculator, tape recorders, FM listening system, among other things for the visually impaired. Audiometer, Otoscope for the hearing impaired (Obi &Ashi, 2016).

Skill; this is any practical economic activity to provide good and services. The ability to have personal or practical knowledge; be versed or practiced; be expert or dexterous. According to (Iroeze et al., 2018), it is the possession of great ability or proficiency; expertness that comes from training and practice.

A skill is the learned ability to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. In other words the abilities that one possesses. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills (Rijkers, 2012). For example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership, self-motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job. Skill usually requires certain environmental stimuli and situations to assess the level of skill being shown and used. People need a broad range of skills in order to contribute to a modern economy. Department of labor study showed that through technology, the workplace is changing, and identified 16 basic skills that employees must have to be able to change with it.

Inclusive education: this is a model also called inclusion, wherein students with special needs spend most or all their time to learn with non-special needs students usually carried out in the common learning environment known as educational centre. This is mainstream programme, explaining a situation in which normal children and children with disabilities are taught together in the same classroom. It gives both categories of children the privilege of studying in the same schools where their performance are scored and graded by the same teacher

perhaps after using different facilities to in teaching both categories of students, waiting to obtain the same result and performance (Iroeze et al, 2018). Their teaching facilities are different and different curriculum, strengths, requirements, and learning styles. These categories of people require flexible and adaptable facilities. Inclusive education removes societal discrimination and promotes integration.

There are three distinct theories of corporate social responsibility; “three Approaches to corporate responsibility, the triple bottom line and stakeholder theory. The corporate social responsibility explains the responsibilities/obligations of a company or organization to communities and inhabitants of the environment where it operates to ensure smooth operations of the organization and interest of individuals. The triple bottom line tries to view peaceful atmosphere of organizations operations as a function of effects of company’s attitude with respect to environment by weight the cost of peaceful locality and her revenue. This theory pointed out that for the company to achieve socially, economically and environmentally, there must be existing economic, social and environmental sustainability. However, this study hinges on “Stakeholder Theory propounded by Fredman (1984). This theory see the corporate social responsibilities or services rendered by companies to her host communities such as the provision of social infrastructure, skill trainings, scholarship etc. as her reason for sustainable existence. Fredman concerned himself with the notion that apart from company management, customers, suppliers etc, host communities are vital stakeholders. Mutual understanding between a company and her host community is an essential ingredient for sustained operations and profit making.

### Entrepreneurship Components and Youth Potentials

The approach to entrepreneurship is the ability to advantage existing opportunities harnessed to provide services and maximize profits. The inherent deliverables are determined by the type of economic activity ventured into. To this end, Barrett, Reardon & Webb, (2001) observed that non-farm entrepreneurship provides income for the household and creates employment. Elkington, (1998), contended that corporate social responsibilities of companies are comprehensive and based on issues find in the MOU. In the views of Nwanyanwu, Amadi & Njoku (2016), non-farm entrepreneurship activities provided by companies in Niger delta are found within the domain of household economic activities such as listed below;

Table1: Selected Skilled Economic Activities

▪ Computer Services	• House design (Architecture)
▪ Shoe mending/cobbling	• Artistic Works/Drawing
▪ Web Development/design	• Bicycle Maintenance
▪ Recharge Card Printing	• Dry Cleaning Services
▪ Phone repairs and maintenance	• Point of Sale (POS operator)
▪ Recharge Card Printing	

Source: Author’s Desk Research, 2017

Development of non-farm entrepreneurship constitutes one of the major sources of self-employment as beneficiaries are not bound to employment seeking. They can be energy exerting activity but self-reliant in nature. It is one of the areas where most physically challenged are found to excel without being thrown to the labour market after acquiring training. Most of the youths favored in the corporate social responsibilities of companies under the non-farm entrepreneurship trainings are more of those without university education. Taking the youths out of the streets is achievably easier though artisan engagements and it has multiple effects of giving other youth apprenticeship opportunities of being trained by

already trained youths. Inclusiveness of physically challenged youths potentiates their ingenuity in performing one activity or the other.

### **Brief History of Special and Inclusive Education**

Documented evidence of special education can be traced to Pedro Ponce de Leon (1578) in Spain on education of deaf children. The presence of special students globally has become a global phenomenon. As the name implies, special education claims its root to Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard (1775—1838) who was a physician nick named “the ‘wild boy of Aveyron, the miracle teacher and Helen Keller. These special educator taught children with sensory physical, language cognitive, learning, and/or emotional abilities which made them different from others. These educators provided instructional materials aimed at assisting the disabled students to meet their individual academic performances. Their teachings removed the limitations confronted by students with disabilities. Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard (1775—1838) record of special needs education encompasses task and setting involving severe disabled students particularly the wild boy of Aveyron. Observed inconsistent behaviors were documented in both mental and behavioral disorders by Itard. The Nineteenth-century reports brought to focus disabilities described as “severe mental retardation, autism, or schizophrenia or autism”. After the introduction of universal public education, milder forms of disability became apparent indicating reduction success. Apparently and to a large extent, special education now help to students with varying forms of disabilities, including mental retardation, emotional disturbance, learning disabilities, speech-language (communication) disabilities, impaired hearing and deafness, low vision and blindness, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, and multiple disabilities.

### **Challenges of Teaching Children in Special Needs Regular Classroom**

Fuandai, (2010) heralded numerous challenges faced in the management of special needs persons. These difficulties are not limited to: large classes managed by few specially trained teachers, late identification of special children, scarcity of special trained teachers, lack or dearth of learning equipment, unfriendly attitude of the society to persons with disabilities and non- proper funding of special schools to acquire learning equipment

#### **Characteristics of Special Needs Teachers**

Ugwuanyi, (2013) pointed out that there are characteristics possessed by qualified special needs teachers in the management of children with disabilities as a result of the type of students they are to manage. These characteristics are not limited to; “creativity, patience, highly intuitive, empathy, resourceful, calm nature, collaborative communicator, detail-service oriented, adaptability, even tempered and deadline —oriented.

### **The Benefits of Inclusive Education**

Benefits of inclusive educational training among children with disabilities have been stressed (Bucher & Krotee, 2002: Dantata, 2015). These gains are not limited to; over the years, the benefits of providing an inclusive education to all children have been shown. Inclusive education (when practiced well) is very important because:” integration of disabled children back to the society, affords persons with disabilities opportunity to learn, higher expectations of all the disabled children, development of individuals’ hidden talents and gifts, there are interactions of children as they develop their goals, motivation of parents to be involved in the training and education of their disabled children. It fosters a culture of respect and belonging, acceptance of individual differences while growing up together, and creation and development of friendship among the growing kids in the course of schooling.

The studies reviewed so far have exposed us to the contributions, challenges and benefits of special needs education in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Christie Toby Inclusive

Education Centre, Oyigbo, Rivers State and Schools for children with special needs, G.R.A Phase 3, Port Harcourt, Rivers, in order to really take a position on this study. It is therefore necessary to conduct similar study on these special and inclusive education centres in Port Harcourt, Rivers.

### **Social Exclusion Theory**

This work is predicated on Social Exclusion Theory propounded in France by Lenoir in 1970s. The gains cut across sociology, economics, education and others. In this discuss, the concept social exclusion theory is explained from the stand point of Inequality in health and not a shift in income and poverty. It explains a situation in which individuals, due to disability are progressively denied access to privileges and rights which are fundamental to social integration such as; employment, civic engagement, democratic participation, healthcare, and eventually stigmatized and marginalized in the society, Lenoir argued that social exclusion attempts to capture powerlessness of individual (not lack of material resources) in a modern society and restriction to social participation and educational capital beyond poverty and income inequality. He explained that it is a situation of emotional, societal and health inequalities. He opined that “social exclusion meted on individuals in the form of disrespect, stigmatization, degradation, devaluation, disparagement and stigma which excluded people feel”. The emphasis is to enthrone equality in the society, close deprivation gap in all sectors of the society in which the social deprivation of joblessness has to be eliminated and individuals made useful and eligible for employment through equal access to education.

### **Empirical Review**

Entrepreneurship development has attracted several works by scholars. Descriptive study by Sudarshan, Newman & Bhattamishra, (2001) on “non-farm income, gender inequality: evidence from rural Ghana and Uganda”, revealed that income from non-farm activities were associated with level of education, age and market distance. The result further showed better performance of non-farm agriculture than other complimented agricultural activities especially with respect to self-employment. In another study by Banbatunde, (2010) on “impact of off-farm income on food security and nutrition in Nigeria using a descriptive approach, found that increase in food prices led to agricultural investment in non-farm entrepreneurship to reduce food insecurity.

Study on “gender and rural non-farm entrepreneurship by Rijkers, (2012), applying ‘matched household-enterprise data sets’ from various countries; Indonesia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka to determine the inequalities on the labour outcomes of non-agricultural labour, found that women strive more to be non-farm entrepreneurs that the men, especially the women who are their households’ heads. Studying “the role of non-farm household enterprises in employment generation, economic growth, reduction of employment and reduction of poverty,” by Pamela, Ivan & Serge (2012) using descriptive analysis, revealed that non-farm economic activity led to entrepreneurship development and multiplier effect of job creation and steady employment.

Considering the “Patterns and determinants of non-farm entrepreneurship in rural Africa” adopting the World Bank’s “Living Standards Measurement Study — Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA) unique data set”, Paula & Naude, (2014) discovered that seasonal farming was the cause of non-sustainability of farm produce and that involvement in entrepreneurship in African results from policies of the government. Tuyen, (2015) conducted an examination of “Non-farm employment and household income among Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam using Logistic regression model. The study discovered that more of the

neighborhoods took to wage jobs with increasing participation in non-farm self-employment due to improved social infrastructural provisions and non-farm employed had more incomes. The work of Zerihum, Giuseppe & Martin, (2015) on “the determinants of non-farm income diversification in rural Ethiopia” distinguished non-farm and off-farm economic activities, applied random effect model discovered that income diversification is determined by level of per capita consumption and livestock holdings. The overall result suggested the reason for more non-farm diversification is the desire to accumulate more income and wealth.

### **Quality of Special Needs Facilities**

A United Nations (2019) survey study conducted in Iran on quality of special needs facilities was target at quality of educational facilities for people with disabilities. Findings of the study were that several children were out of school due to disabilities. Children were excluded from schools due to lack of adequately trained teachers and lack of trained teachers. Rights of persons with disabilities as stipulated by United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) were not adhered to by Iran. Segregation of children on the basis of disability, refusal of principals to give admission to children into mainstream schools due to disability, low quality of audio and Braille textbooks, lack of quality accommodation for students with disabilities. The study recommended for government policies in line with United Nations Convention Guideline on rights of children with disabilities. Repeal the law where only under medical report stating educability of a child is required before admission is given to disabled persons. Ensure that mainstream schools provide accommodations for students with disabilities.

A study in Ghana on Availability of quality and supportive facilities availability for effective Teaching was investigated by Okyere-Kwakye, (2013) using descriptive statistics and simple percentages. It was found that toilets, urinals and classrooms blocks were available while accommodation for teachers, computer laboratories, common room for staff, library books were not available. It was recommended that government should put in place policies that will ensure the provision of key infrastructure in schools for effective learning and performance. Companies and other corporate organizations should assist their host communities in the provision of learning materials and physical infrastructure to aid educational teachings.

In Malaysia, Males Norwahidah, et al, (2019) quantitatively worked on Teachers’ Views on Classroom Infrastructure Facilities in Special Education Integration Program in Primary School in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan district. Data were descriptively analyzed. Result showed that there was moderate provision of classroom infrastructure. The paper suggested for improvement in the provision of learning infrastructure to make teaching convenient for students.

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, (UNICEF) (2015) evaluation on global implementation of the right of children with disabilities to education, following the right of the child (CRC) and right of persons with disabilities (CRPD) as specified in articles 7 and 24 of the rights. It was discovered that people still segregate and stigmatize those with disabilities while government is not improving in the provision of resources to accommodate the disabled persons. Access to school is being denied people with disabilities. Furthermore, disabled persons do not have access to quality education. Recommendations were that government should have accessibility to inclusive education, investment in special needs teachers, involve the communities in their program, and obtain progress data on progress made. There should be other devised approaches to tackling constraints to inclusive education.

In Brong Ahafo regions of Ghana, Opoku, (2015) investigated the “Accessibility of educational facilities for children with Disabilities” since as stipulated in the Child Right Act, the undertone is to make beneficiaries (the educated disabled children to possess the right skills, knowledge to be gainfully employed in the society. Findings revealed that; Educational facilities were inaccessible in Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions due to environmental factors. Results further showed that increase in educational costs, lack of resources and qualified teachers”, insufficient government contributions and resource teachers were inaccessible. Training of more teachers, sensitization on integration of disabled persons into the society and establishment of more inclusive schools was suggested.

## **Methodology**

### **Study design**

This study is a survey design conducted in Rivers State, Nigeria. Rivers State is found in the Southern part of the country called Niger Delta. It is the second highest oil producing states in the country. It has mangroves and water aquifer good for agricultural production

### **Data Selection**

The data required for this study were collected at the selected schools level and consist of Blazing Heart Autism Centre (BHAC), Schools for children with special needs (SCSN) and Christie Toby Inclusive Education Centre, (CTIEC) to help obtain insight on Demographic characteristics of beneficiaries, physical disabilities and extent of entrepreneurship inclusiveness of respondents.

### **Sources of Data**

The study made use of primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. For the purpose of selection of sample schools as the unit of analysis The primary data was complemented by materials from secondary sources such as archives, text books, journals, conference papers and relevant documented materials.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The study employed a multi-stage sampling procedure. First, purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting a target of 120 special needs students engaged in the various skills in their various economic activities in the study area in various schools. This sample size is considered representative of the entire heads of disabled persons in the study area. Secondly, the study area was divided into three chiefdoms namely: Obio/Akpor, Port Harcourt and Oyigbo local government areas in Rivers State, based on the studied institutions. Thirdly, were their areas of concern or specializations to ensure proportionate representativeness of the entire population? This process yielded a sample of 40 samples each. However, a sample size of 90 was utilized for the analysis.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data collected. The descriptive statistics such as mean, averages and frequency distribution were used to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics of both skilled and non-skilled economic activities of disabled persons. In addition, student t-test and analysis of means techniques were employed to establish the difference between the income skilled and unskilled specially challenged persons.

Table 1. Age and Economic Activity of respondents

Age	Skilled Economic Activities												Total
	Manufacturing		Trading & commerce		Contracting		Transport services		Consultancy		Others		
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	
<b>0-40</b>	31	34.4	41	45.6	40	44.4	36	43.3	35	38.9	36	40.0	222
<b>41-50</b>	23	25.6	21	23.3	22	24.4	26	28.9	23	25.6	22	24.4	146
<b>51-60</b>	16	17.8	12	13.3	18	20.0	17	18.9	22	24.4	17	18.9	102
<b>61 &amp; above</b>	20	22.2	16	17.7	10	11.1	13	14.4	10	11.1	15	16.7	84
<b>Total</b>	90	100	90	100	90	100	90	100	90	100	90	100	554

Source: Author's Computation 2021

While the age-group of 0-40 accounted for (34.4%), age-group of 41-50 constituted about (25.6%) for those engaged in manufacturing economic activities. Perhaps the least group is the old age which constituted of about 51-60 which was about 16 respondents and accounted for (17.9%) of the sampled population. For the older disabled entrepreneurs in manufacturing sector, the age-groups of 51 and above accounted for 20 reflecting (22.2%) respectively.

Table 2. Gender Participation in Special Needs Economic Activities

Gender	Manufacturing		Trading		Construction		Transport		Consultancy		Others		Total
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	
Male	67	74.4	68	75.5	73	81.1	69	76.7	64	71.1	59	65.6	341
Female	23	25.5	22	24.4	17	18.9	21	23.3	26	28.9	31	34.4	177
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>518</b>

Source: Author's Computation, 2021.

Also, disabled women were not found to engage in construction activities but men dominated this sector with (81.1%) participation not minding their disability. The social structure of the area sees construction activities as strictly man's activity. Again, in the transportation sector it is men that dominated with (76.7%) for those that could drive (depending on the part of the body that is affected by the disability while the women recorded (23.3%). In consultancy, women were found to record (28.9%) while men recorded (71.1%) that means men still dominate the sector. In other areas, male were 65.6 while female were 331 representing 65.6% and 34.4% respectively.

Table 3. Contributions of Disabled Economic Activities to Employment Generation.

Economic activities	BHAC		SCSN		CTIEC		Σ (%)	
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)		
<b>Manufacturing</b>	30	33.3	12	13.3	8	8.9	17	19.5
<b>Trading</b>	28	31.1	38	42.2	35	40.0	34	39.0
<b>Construction</b>	17	18.8	22	26.7	23	28.8	22	25.2
<b>Transport</b>	7	7.7	5	5.5	10	11.1	7	8.0
<b>Consultancy</b>	6	6.7	11	12.2	10	11.1	7	8.0
<b>Others</b>	2	4	2	3	4	2	6	6.8
<b>Total =</b>	90	100	90	100	90	100		

Source: Author's Computation, 2021

- Blazing Heart Autism Centre (BHAC)
- Schools for children with special needs (SC SN) and
- Christie Toby Inclusive Education Centre, (CTIEC)

This means that manufacturing takes after trade and commerce. Trading also generate employment with Blazing Hart Centre (BHAC) recording the highest percentages of respondents involved in Schools for children with special needs (SCSN) and the manufacturing with (15.5%) while Christie Toby Inclusive Education Centre, (CTIEC) 40.0% for trading and 28.8% construction. In the construction sector, Schools for children with special needs (SCSN) recorded more participation in the trading sector with (42.2%), BHAC had (31.1%), and CTIEC (40.0%) respectively. In the transportation sector, BHAC had (7.7%), SCSN had (5.5%), while CTIEC had (11.1%) respectively. This might be attributed to the level of teaching facilities in the centres. In consultancy activities, those that were trained in BHAC had (6.7%). SCSN had (12.2%) and CTIEC had (11.1%) respectively.

**Table 4:** Mean income of disable persons households by Economic Activities

Year	Types of income	Income Mean	(₦) (%)	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
2015	Skilled	2.50E5	49.0	3.91E3	26307.32
	Skilled and unskilled	3.50E5	50.0	2.61E5	20381.53
2016	Skilled	3.50E5	61.0	4.72E5	32580.36
	Skilled and unskilled	2.50E	51.0	3.76E5	28164.68
2017	Skilled	3.50E5	47.0	3.06E5	21323.24
	Skilled and unskilled	3.50E5	50.0	4.72E5	35343.77
2018	Skilled	4.50E5	60.2	7.16E5	45825.75
	Skilled and unskilled	3.50E5	50.0	3.46E5	25207.56
2019	Skilled	4.50E5	51.0	2.77E5	20048.75
	Skilled and unskilled	3.50E5	50.0	4.85E5	26373.68
2020-2021	Skilled	3.50E5	48.0	4.87E5	25484.37
	Skilled and unskilled	3.50E5	56.0	3.11E5	13771.67

The result is presented in Table 4. It showed that all those that embrace other economic activities including skilled activities do better in terms of higher income except in the year 2015 when the mean income of disabled persons households was (49.0%) whereas the mean income of those that engaged in skills and other economic activity was (3.9 1%) representing some (2.0%) higher for the same period. In 2008, the mean income of disabled households that engaged in unskilled only increased by (61.0%) but income of households that ventured into both skilled and unskilled economic activities was increased to (52.5%). It shows that between 2007 and 2008 unskilled household income remained at (3.5%). In 2009, those households that ventured into skilled economic activities had their mean income increase by (48.0%). But for the households that went into unskilled economic activities, the mean income further increased from (51.0%) to (60.2%) representing an increase of (9.2%).

Considering the trend of income generation over the periods (2007-2011), while households that ventured into unskilled activities had their income fluctuated, this collaborated the work of (Ellis, & Freeman, (2004), that those that ventured into skilled economic activities and other unskilled economic activities experienced a steady increase in their mean income over the same period.

Table 5. Calculating Values of t for Mean Incomes of Disabled Persons.

Year	t-test for Equity of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Differences	
	t	df.	Sig.(2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Means	Lower	Upper
2016	.607	.90	.368	21181.36516	28826.1474	70024.03183	36542.07850
2017	1.381	.90	.128	48252.23752	30001.60543	1.26814E5	18280.16257
2018	2.637	.90	.005	1.08771E5	28886.26567	1.77414E5	31226.11004
2019	2.083	.90	.036	81544.01258	81544.01258	1.777712E5	4487.57681
2020	1.513	.90	.070	1.27113E5	1.27113E5	2.558676E5	10650.46778

Source: Author's Computation

Table 5 presents the calculated student's t-test results. In 2007, the mean annual income of households that ventured into farming only were compared with those of households that engage in both farming and non-farm economic activities, the calculated t-value (0.607) and the critical value (1.98) showed a significant difference at 0.05 probability level. In 2016, the calculated value (1.38) and the critical value (1.96) even though it was lower than 2017, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 significance level. However, the differences observed might be attributed to sampling error hence; there was a significant difference in the income of the two groups. But income differentials were higher in 2018 with t-value (2.637) and the critical value (1.96) indicating a significant difference in the income of the two groups of persons (skilled disabled and unskilled disabled).

In 2016, the calculated value of t is (2.083) and the critical value of (1.96) thus, the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 significance level. In 2020, t value dropped to (1.51) and the critical value (1.96) the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 probability level. The differences in the mean annual incomes of the disabled persons in 2019 and 2020 were found to be statistically significant.

### Conclusion

Empirical analysis of entrepreneurship development and inclusive education training revealed that the decision to integrate physically challenged persons into the society is aimed removing stigmatization which is one of the major causes of suicide in the society. Entrepreneurship development and informal sector participation largely constitutes a centrifugal force within in resolving the poverty situation of the rural household in the society. Inclusive education is fast helping in solving problems of household through skill acquisitions programmes. By and large, the sector requires improvement in the form of more centers and facilities to train person with disability. Building the capacity of an individual to participate in skilled economic activities after auguring the right education is a step in the right direction. Accessibility to basic special training boosts the moral of physically challenged to be self-employed in other to provide house generate personal income; provide food to the family and educational training their children. Findings revealed that mean annual incomes of the disabled persons within the revealed period were statistically significant. Household of income of physically challenged that ventured into skilled economic activities increased.

### **Recommendations**

Following the findings of this research and if the suggestions were to be adopted, to improve entrepreneurship and education inclusiveness of persons with disability, the following recommendations are important; (i) The focus of initiating entrepreneurship development and inclusive education programmes should be geared towards the expansion of self-employment opportunities rather than wage-paid-casual employment, (ii) government should put a law against stigmatization of physically challenged person and (iii) again laws should be put in place to encourage zero rejection of qualified disabled persons from employment.

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