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Beggary in the society: Disability as its mechanism

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Abstract

Beggary has become the fastest growing enterprise in Nigeria with the flock of individuals with special needs getting recruited into its reprehensible venture. It menace has not only becoming frustrated, disgusted and worrisome, but establishing a picture of ruthless and unscrupulous bionetwork in Nigeria; all in the name of equating disabilities with inability or incapacity coupled with economic hardship such individuals are facing. This paper addresses disability as a mechanism of beggary in which societal attitude in term of laissez-faire, discrimination and absence of equal opportunity Based on that, this paper encompasses two subheadings that is “Beggary a collar on the society” and “beggary and individuals with special needs” with suggested resolutions.

Keywords: Fastest growing enterprise, mechanism, Nigeria

Introduction

“Silver and Gold have I none, but what I have that I give thee” (as captured by King James Version, 2017 Act 3: 6) was the dictum of apostles to a lame man at the entrance way. Biblically, this linear account unveiled definite psychometrics facts about the man in question accredited as lame. The man was a renowned beggar due to his poor physical health condition and as a result has to lie in wait for the general public including the attendants of the synagogue to be venerated through their breads and coins. This scenario lasted for many years before the general aphorism of “Bi ekun ba pe di ale kan ayo nbo lowuro” (in translation no matter how a sorrow tarries, better day of joy comes in the morning) could be spellbound to fulfilment. That was day two apostles were sighted coming through the entrance gate of the synagogue by the lame man who as well wanted to take the pro of these men passing through his spot to ask them for alms as anticipated. Thoughtlessly, the lame man expectancy was overturned by a mind-boggling largess of the two men acknowledged as apostles who released their possession to unleashed the man from servitude of odds and ends, alms and offering often threw to the man by the general publics and made him a self-sufficient, liberated and non-restricted person any more. In this age, the reverse is the case as far as the makeover of folks with special needs (which is indispensable for the betterment of humanity) is concerned most especially on the part of aristocrats or landed gentry. Instead, individuals with special needs are greatly motivated to be subjected to crumbs from the table of the influential persons in the society. Meanwhile, insalubrious state of these individuals with special needs coupled with their fiscal hardship are proofs that have naked their ordeal and validated the saying that beggar cannot be a chooser; a clear indication about the existence of social inequality in the social order. The circumlocutory inklings to be deduced from above logical inference by many including seasoned scholars and writers in special needs education and humanities includes: how insensible it is for individuals with special needs to have their means of livelihood in the hand of others with a credence that giving a penny opens the door for manifold in returns; could it be that the prayers of beggars with special needs are so spirited to fascinate people visiting their camps with cooler of beans cake, rice and “amala”; or are individuals with special needs’ condition unconnected to self-discipline catchphrase of “man shall not live by bread alone”. Is it not controversial that there is a serious connection between disability and beggary has it is being designed by human belief, action and comportment today. With or without ricochet, beggary seems to have been an antediluvian vocation unambiguously predestined and fashioned for certain beings (principally individuals with special needs) by the social order for the whys and wherefores best known to the folks fetching in such reprehensible business. Every now and then the entire world has not been able to see whatsoever wrong with special needs persons living on alms as means of livelihood, but quick to scorn the able person who seek for aid in terms of

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cash and product saying “se o ge lowo ni abi o kan lese” (meaning are you an amputee that could not work). This might be the reason for individuals without special needs fictitiously depicting one ailment or the other so as to procure equivalent sympathy. Whereas those who are fortunate to have individuals with special needs as children or relatives quickly consider such as mechanism for full time beggary business and become better off through that. The fact remains not all the individuals with special needs who are poor are into beggary and likewise not all those are already undertaking beggary are doing so because they are poor. Yet, it is being predictable that beggary is a foundation laid by the society as an avenue for individuals with special needs to get out of their destitute. Hitherto, every nook and cranny of the human ecosystem in this part of the world seems to have been converted to beggars’ camps and the rate at which this gruesome corporate gets member conscripted into its enterprise has increased further than one’s resourcefulness. The in-flock of individuals with or without special needs condition into this dimensional beggary has not only sounded for far-reaching doggedness before this common depravity will decriminalize itself as customs but as well require appropriation and engagement of individuals with special needs within their surrounding area. The inclusion of individuals with special needs in multifarious sections of the society appears to be the solitary medium of differing the dreadful nature of beggary among individuals with special needs as well as those forging the conditions to congealed themselves in such enterprise and stay in it whether or not the individuals have overcome their hardship. Once a problem is not identified the solution cannot ever be surface.

Beggary: A collar on the Society

The catchphrase “beggary” in accordance to the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2003 and 2004) is a chain of activities at which an individual asks a stranger for money on the basis of being poor or need altruistic aids for health or religious reasons. Molsa (1992) in Rugoho and Siziba (2014)^[44] testified that beggary as the style of netting one's living through the pay got from the general public using psychological variables of age, health and economic conditions as a means of gaining sympathy. The term beggary according to Oxford Advanced Dictionary is the means of asking for money, food and clothes as gift or charity. Beggary according to Kennedy and Fitzpatrick (2001)^[26] and (2011) respectively is the act of requesting person walking by for money in a public place. The term beggary as operationally used in the study channelled by Rohit and Hwang (2002)^[43] means discontinuing publics on the street to request for succour. The study of Aderinto, Akinwale, Atere and Oyenuga (2007)^[2] designated beggary as an open solicitation of monetary and non-monetary assistance from anonymous donors through a plea, deceit or exposure of deformity. Olawale (2007)^[38] conceptualized beggary as the custom of beseeching kindness from someone or would-be givers for subsistence and amelioration. Similarly, Wikipedia (2009)^[49] explained beggary as an action by which individual makes a plea for something in a supplicating manner in which such an individual might suffer emotive and or bodily destruction as a consequence. Moreover, Wikipedia (2010)^[50] gave a high-pitched meaning of beggary as a practice by which individual appeals to people he/she encountered in public

place for money, food, shelter, and other without any things in return. In the opinion of John (2010)^[24], beggary is the tenacity of getting a quantifiable value as a gift or charitable donation. Balogun (2012)^[6] referred to beggary as a kind of arrangement in which an individual count on financial self-possession of strangers without providing food or services in return, though it is just as much work as a wage job. Alike, Chukwulobe (2011)^[8] described beggary as the act of stopping people for their straightforwardness which could either be in the form of money or food. Meanwhile, Ahamdi (2010)^[3] admitted beggary as social vices or problem relating to psychosomatic imports, nasty, and that of surface-dwelling and social arrangement of inner-city areas. To Bukoye (2015)^[7] beggary is an approach that contractual others to award a monetary or measurable support without any intention of reciprocation. Beggary has proclaimed by Rugoho and Siziba (2014)^[44] is an incessant way of asking for gifts that seems to have become vital for continued existence and livelihood of certain individuals. Beggary or begging as the case may be is a process by which an individual or group of people non-stop to make a request from other members of the society so as to bring oneself out of wretchedness and deprivation (Collins and Blomley, 2003)^[9]. Bring above connotations and denotations into line, Groce and Murray (2012)^[15] related the cordial intimacy between beggary and society to twig on poverty. Meanwhile, the exertion of Ojo (2005)^[36] maintained that beggary is a conflagration of poverty as a matter of the fact that beggars are seen in far and wide of the urban public cosmoeses such as filling stations, restaurants, shopping malls, a number of worship centres (most especially churches and mosques), venue of ceremonies, and schools’ gates or surroundings begging for alms (Jelili, 2006; Adedibu and Jelili, 2011)^[22-23].

In addition, Naalir (2010)^[28] highlighted beggars’ hangout locations to include entrances to office buildings, major road intersections, almsgiving houses, and parking places, railway stations, bus terminations and Automated Teller Machine (abbreviated as ATM) sites. This revelation constrained Menka, Hasan and Tarique (2014)^[27] to pronounced beggary as a social aberration that poses an inordinate challenge on urban planners. In the same vein, the findings of Fawole, Ogunkan and Omoruan (2011)^[13] stared beggary as a social eccentricity since such disavows the customs, promises and tenets of the society through increased in poverty and joblessness as roll pressing individuals with special needs to foster a begging comportment. Although, poverty as stated by DFID (2000)^[10] is not the consequence of the deprivation of resources instead such is being considered as inability of individuals (containing those with special needs) to tapped into the existing resources as expected due to the condition, location and belief of the individuals. The economic hardship together with segregation and discernment defying individuals with special needs at all quarters of the society could as well prop up their engrossment in beggary. Even though the sightings of Elembah (2011)^[11] has not only confirmed poverty as an envoy of beggary but has deliberated that over 85% of Nigerian citizenry with the inclusion of individuals with special needs are living in abject poverty. The exceeding substantiation has put it straight that there are more Nigerians living below one dollar per day in Northern part with estimated value of 78%, 74% and 70% of them in North East, North West and North

Central respectively. On the other hand, the magnitude of poverty in the southern part of Nigeria is lesser with 23%, 28% and 30% of population of South-eastern, South-western and South-South Nigeria are said to be living within the borderline of poverty. The high rate of poverty in Nigeria specifically among the people of northern part keeps afloat the conclusion of Jelili (2006) ^[22] that hard work is highly valued among the people of southern territory (comprising south-east, south-west and south-south) of Nigeria which is the reason for looking down upon beggars as the wretched people of the society while beggary is well patronized among northerners through religious backing and cultural encouragement for myriad population of redundant and idle people in the region. All the same, the economic hardship has been consistently time-honoured within the full works of Seni (2017) ^[45], Groce, Loeb and Murray (2014) ^[17], Rugoho and Siziba (2014) ^[4], Groce, Murray, Loeb, Tramontano, Trani and Mekonnen (2013) ^[15], Jelili (2006; 2009 and 2013) ^[22-23], Abari and Audu (2013); Groce and Murray (2012) ^[15], Ogunkan and Omoruan (2011) ^[13], Groce, Kett, Lang, Trani (2011); Tambawal (2010); Ogunkan (2009); Amman (2006) ^[4]; Collins and Blomley (2003) ^[9]; Kennedy and Fitzpatrick (2001) ^[26] among several others as the fundamental seed of beggary among individuals with special needs. Thus, forces enthralling individuals with special needs into beggary built-in begging been a lucrative, lack of education, joblessness, household disintegration, unrestrained bucolic to conurbation expedition, misfortune through death-trap and natural disaster as well as permissiveness of begging through religious and cultural practices (Fahad, 2013; Namwata, Mgabo and Dimoso, 2012; Namwat, Mgabo and Dimoso, 2011; Namwata, Mgabo and Dimoso, 2010; NPC, 2006; Amman, 2006) ^[12, 4, 30-31].

Also, Gabriel, Fasakin and Mande (2015) ^[14] echoed that lack of care, human capital deficit, a cycle of poverty, and poor economic sustenance, financial prostration and poor access to school as well as dispossession of desirable materials exist as impediments for non-existence of formal education among beggars with one form of disabilities or the other. Apparently, Fahad (2013) ^[12] was of the view that begging for sacred intention, unwise charity and undiscerning alms giving are the effervescent religious rudiments that appear to have braced beggary among members of a society. It is for that reason diverse categories of beggars like mendicants; panhandlers and vagabonds have come to grasp begging as a profession that will not only offer beggars with vista engagement, but as well placate such individuals from miserable life of down-and-out. Beggary seems to be an insignia of social ham-fistedness as a matter of the fact that alms giving is an outlet through which societies accomplish its religious obligations and alignments. There is no iota of doubt that most religious affiliations in Nigeria embolden giving of alms to the disadvantaged and such ubiquitous daily routine of alms-giving by individuals and institutions bring into being its personages among individuals with special needs in conformity with the conclusions of Onoyase (2010) ^[39] that the act of generosity on the part of public have augmented begging in the society. In the same vein, Hasan (2013) ^[18] well-maintained the superfluities of begging where societies tend to be generous as giving money to beggars is concerned may directly cause the individual to imbibe the profundity of torpor to work. Equally, Groce, Loeb and

Murray (2014) ^[17] stressed that “cultural attitudes towards begging may initiate either to beg or sidestep it. Apparently, begging may be spotted as contemptuous choice where autonomy and self-sufficiency are every so often emphasised, but less frowned upon where religious teachings eulogise the individual for providing alms to the disadvantaged. This is why beggary is not popular in the eastern part Nigeria because it is being considered as a taboo among “Igbo” people (Jelili, 2009; Jelili, 2013) ^[22-23]. On the contrary, beggary has been well-received as a livelihood in the northern part of Nigeria through Almajiri system and street begging. Also, there is a conjecture that individuals (including those with special needs) who are into beggary are left with no option than to join this reproachful enterprise of beggary on the ground of unemployment. However, Ojo and Benson (2017) ^[36] resonated that of Okunmadewa’s (2001) study with estimation that 82% of beggars (including individuals with special needs) are either not employed or being out of a job. Thus, forces that encourage and institutionalize individuals with special needs into beggary in the present-day society are spiral around four interlaced puffs of religious, cultural, economic and educational factors. From the on-going lustre beggary could be an asylum for lives in abject poverty.

Beggary and Individuals with Special Needs

The term persons with disabilities or persons with special needs as the case may be has not only underscored or emphasized the limitation of a group of people to abundantly play a part in the societal accomplishments on the equal basis with others, but has directed the uncut attention of the society towards the gloominess that defies the strength of individuals in that category. This rationalisation according to Peters and Chimedza (2000) ^[42] has led to the equation of disability to the inability with a view that its sufferers needed to be sympathized and treated psychosomatically so as to be rescued from their sickness and malfunction (Usman, 2015) ^[48]. Nevertheless, the ratification of the term “individuals with special needs” in the place of the archaic expressions of “persons or individuals with disabilities” is not only for academic resolution but a globally accepted nomenclature to address people who are distinct in nature. Ever since that several regulations and programmes have been initiated to meet the demand of individuals within such category. Regardless of the realization made recently, individuals with special needs in the nook and cranny of our society (Nigeria in particular) are still facing copious obstructions to their participation in the viable events of their various communities (The United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018). In fact, limitless statistics of individuals with special needs are still found in strategic spaces to be connected with beggary based on sequence of surveys and reports from the experts in the related fields of study. For instance, the empirical study of Yousaf (2003) ^[52] informed that individuals with special needs are more involved in beggary than their counterparts without special needs; and the misconception of societies that individuals with special needs are incapable to do something to earn a living is a momentum that has the participation of individuals with special needs in beggary. The evaluation of the first-hand facts on the culture and practices of beggary by Ogunkan (2009) ^[34-35] uncovered the fact that physically impaired beggars constitute the bulk of identified beggars than their

counterparts with sensory problems (that is visually impairment and hearing impairment) as well as folks with neuro-developmental problems in the beggary undertakings lesser in numbers. Meanwhile, the findings of Ayele (2016) ^[5] clearly naked the engagement of individuals with special needs in the hubbub of beggary as the one that lie in the middle of feebleness and subsistence remedy. For that course, the author acknowledged the absence of societal support as groundwork for the whelming of individuals with special needs in beggary. Also, individuals with special needs may have more health care requirements than other members of the society; which could make the individuals to be more vulnerable to a low quality of life due to high cost of the medical bill. Yeo (2001) ^[51] and Yusuf, Bello, Ogungbade, Omotosho, Alhassan and Mustapha (2013) ^[53], had one at a time related the widely engrossment of individuals with special needs in beggary to the prevalent perception of such individuals as the cladding within their vicinities. According to the aforesaid authors many firms, companies, and cooperation do not included individuals with special needs in their operations, while some only mulled over their applications without any exclusive setting for their acceptance and staffing due to non-supporting architecture designs of most of the affected establishment. For instance, buildings are erected with staircase narrow entrances and without clamp; scarceness of braille and audio tape information or absence of sign language interpreters; unfriendly “public” transport system and host of others have been the reasons for exoneration of individuals with special needs from employment process or being out of schools for beggary (Yeo, 2001) ^[51]. Thus, the implication of an unwarranted discrimination on the part of individuals with special needs has made itself manifest not in any area than beggary as a matter of the fact that the affected are often left out of all mode of social, civil and economic collaborations. Now and again, influential individuals with special needs may lack political will to initiate more than enough programmes that will fast track their advancement in life. Also, the beggary jaunt of individuals with special needs could be aligned to a belief that the arrival of an individual with special needs in a family is associated with evil, necromancy or perfidy.

Yeo (2001) ^[51] further that confusion in the middle of ailment or limitation may result to throttling, overprotecting and marginalizing of individuals with special needs from day to day challenges without excluding their low expectations jointly held by individuals with special needs and the general publics. Though, in the get-up-and-go business of beggary, four major categories of individuals with special needs have been noted. Olawale (2007) ^[38] established these categories to include: firstly are those forced into beggary by their conditions. Next to that are those who went to it not as a survival means but on a permissible norm without knowing it is abnormal. Thirdly, are those enthused or motivated to go into by their parents or relatives. Lastly are those who are liable psychosomatically to do so because of their inferior self-esteem, motivation and conquest. In a nutshell, the bond between beggary and special needs is like a dog and its tail which cannot be taken for hyperbole simply because the two are inseparable just the way the poor and infirmities may never be seized in the society. Hence, strategies and techniques have been noted for making a living by individuals with special needs through beggary. Out of the

identified methods are: presenting a supporting letter for soliciting; individual with special needs aided by other or assistive device to make a plea on the street; handing of envelop that seeks for alms; hanging of tab or slate on their necks asking for alms; toiling around with a medical referral letter or drugs’ prescription note; as well as claiming to have financial difficult.

Conclusion

Hypothetically and empirically, beggary is a social problem and its thoughtful, justification, and extrapolation require an in-depth alertness of the social forces that indorse it. Any effort to tackle this ugly situation in sequestration of social measure is not likely to crop helpful domino effect. This is because beggary is an ingress of dysfunctional society in which its long-term activities has become menace not only to the under developed country like Nigeria but to the far-reaching biosphere. Beggary and disability are not the same even though both have the tendency of driving each other. Ever since the recognition of an inextricable tie between beggary and disability; no effort has been deployed to get beggary vacated its menace off the length and the breadth of the Nigerians’ societies. This is because there is more to beggary enterprise on the part of individuals with special needs than getting it analysed from point of view of social judgement theory. This is because individuals with special needs have been made to get solace from beggary from the very long due to the adversities and sceneries attached to their conditions. However getting people particular individuals with special needs desist from such horrible profession might require carrot and stick approach. That is social welfare and attitudinal change on the part of the society have gargantuan role most especially to those individuals currently weighing up their option for beggary as the only way out for their negation and defeat to societal attitudes. Therefore, resentments against beggary perhaps not been objectified until individuals with special needs relish equal rights with their abled counterparts and thriftily empowered to the extent of meeting their own daily expense within a resuscitated troposphere.

Recommendations

In order to tackle the perilous act of beggary in Nigeria where begging tend to be the fastest growing industry due to low per capital income of the run-of-the-mill citizens who are up to two-third of country’s population from which over twenty-five millions of them are individuals with differ special needs conditions; respectable control have to be taken in conjunction with with the implementation of Nigerian’s disabilities law of 2019 that entrenched the right of individuals with special needs as follows:

- Life and be allowed to survive and developed in capacities
- Not be discriminated under any circumstances;
- Be protected from indecent and inhuman treatment that may occur through sexual abuse or exploitation, drug abuse, child labour, torment, maltreatment and neglect;
- Free good health, medical attention for survival, personal growth and development;
- Compulsory free basic education and equal opportunity for higher education depending on his or her ability;
- Adequate recreation, leisure and sport;
- Provision of special communication at any hospital;

- Waiver of charges on assistive devices particularly at motor park; Be consider first in queues and in any case of emergency; Equal right to work;
- The accessibility of physical structure, public building, road and sidewalk, and public transport, and access to habituation and rehabilitation services to mention but a few

Aside that, government at all levels has to outlawed beggary as an enterprise by vacating beggars off the roads alongside with an employment provision for nothing less than 3.5% of individuals with special needs in every organisations in service within the country either owned by foreigners or by sons and daughters of the soil. While those the intention of self-employment on the basis of age and health should be empowered and supported with financial capacity to start any venture of their choice. On a final note, in the case of home or hospital bound special needs condition; the victim should be captured in by a social support scheme with token compensation at the end of every month.

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