

COMPLETION REPORT

Social Supports for People with Disabilities in Japan: Models and Implications for Vietnam

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In Japan, it is estimated the number of disabled people of around 5.9%, just smaller than the ratio in Vietnam. Two thirds of them are physical disabled persons. The nation of Japan has a new and long-term program for government measures related to people with disabilities (PWD) that was formulated on the basis of the Fundamental Law for Disabled Persons which was enacted in the year 1993. There are systematic bases on supporting Japanese people with disabilities, from the comprehensive legal documents, policies, approaches to practices which are great lessons and implications to Vietnam. This research aims at (a) identifying the theoretical framework on social inclusion in general and social inclusion for people with disabilities in particular in both Vietnam and Japan contexts; (b) investigating the practice for promoting social inclusion for people with disabilities in the both countries; (c) applying the lessons and experiences on the social inclusion for people with disabilities in Japan to the Vietnam context, especially in terms of social work theory and practices, and practical activities. This research applied the social constructionism, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism as theoretical backgrounds, and collects the data from literature review, survey about the life experiences of people with disabilities in Vietnam with 220 responses in Hanoi and 12 individual interviews of people with disabilities to formulate the implication for social supports in line with social inclusion approach and experiences from the Japanese context.

In the scope of this study the ratio of people with physical disabilities is highest, followed by those with visual disability, mental and psychiatric, hearing and speech, and intellectual disabilities. In which male with disabilities is higher than that of female in all forms. The distribution of aged group among PWD indicated that the ratio of women with disabilities (WWD) is generally a little lower than that of men with disabilities (MWD) in the group under the age of 18 and in the elderly group over age 55. The findings indicate that WWD had similar hardships and challenges with MWD, but in many cases they faced additional multiple and intersectional discrimination that deprived them of their rights, opportunities and resources. PWD tended to draw on prevailing cultural notions of gender relations to explain the discrepancies between the situations of MWD and WWD with regard to education, employment and social activities by stereotyping female as soft and male as strong in both mental and physical senses. There are considerable hurdles that hinder the integration of disabled women in the society at large, the most important being the unequal burden of domestic work which limit women's involvement in the workplace and in civic society, the lack of PWD friendly facilities for moving about, not to mention negative, discriminatory attitudes toward PWD in the public sphere. The findings also reveal that a considerable number of PWD, especially female, are unaware of the legal documents and policies related to disabilities in Viet Nam and have no access to the social services.

This research findings also indicate that there is gender difference and fulfilling the rights related to sexual, love, marriage and childbirth among PWD. The window of opportunities of love and marriage for PWD was very narrow, and it is narrower for WWD. This has much to do with social norms requiring women to perform their roles as wives, mothers and daughters in law with all the obligations that entails; often a daunting task for WWD during

pregnancy, child caring as well. While disability is seen as the major obstacles in PWD search for a suitable partner, single WWD often had to repress or hide their sexual feelings to avoid social criticism. MWD seemed to fare better in terms of sexual fulfillment.

From researching the inclusion of PWD in different aspects of life in Vietnam, with consideration to current social supports for the PWD in Japan, it is found that PWD in Vietnam is still facing challenges and difficulties on being socially included due to the limitation of social and economic conditions and availabilities of social services. This research recommend to have specific activities to promote the social equity for PWD, develop the appropriate responses to strengthen the support network for PWD from the locality based on community approach./.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

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Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)