

CHAPTER 1

THE FEELINGS OF PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES REGARDING DISCRIMINATION IN TEMBISA

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of discrimination against people with physical disabilities still exists in South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) has tried to eradicate it, but there are still some sectors where it is been practiced. According to the White Paper on an Integrated Disability Strategy (1997:57) people with disabilities, like the majority of people in this country during the apartheid era, were denied fundamental human rights. However, they further experience discrimination on the basis of their disability. It further stated that people with disabilities are marginalized and excluded from many aspects of life.

Green (1997:34) highlighted that the World Health Organization has estimated that throughout the world 500-540 million people are disabled, representing a prevalence ratio of one in ten persons. She further estimated that this figure would probably double in the next 35 years. Although the World Health Organization estimates that 10% of the world's population is disabled, the Department of Health estimates that the number of disabled people in South Africa constitutes 12,8% of the population (Green, 1997:343).

Hales (1996:6) indicated that for over 100 years, disability has presented as a culturally embedded socially accepted form of oppression against people with disabilities. Heller, Flohr and Zegans (1992:232) asserted that modern stereotypical perceptions about people with disabilities began with the industrial revolution.

To date some community members still encounter difficulties in accepting people with physical disabilities, with specific reference to Tembisa.

Tembisa is a township situated 4km north of Olifantsfontein and 15km south of Kempton Park. According to Nagler (1990:1) society's attitudes about the disabled are in a process of evolution. The disabled desire to escape from the prejudices and discriminations that have had the effect of casting them into a minority. Since the disabled are a disadvantaged group, they encounter social, physical, psychological and economic barriers in attempting to maximize their rehabilitative and habilitative potentials.

From the researcher's observation, some members of the society in Tembisa regard people with disabilities as useless, incapable and as objects that need to be isolated and pitied. Some even have a negative attitude towards them. This attitude leads to the destruction of people with disabilities' self esteem and self-image.

Nagler (1990:1) stated that people with disabilities often believe that they are members of the victimized minority, who are prevented by the attitudes of society from enjoying the quality of life that they deserve. Being victims of prejudice and discrimination, the disabled often suffer the alienation and isolation experienced by racial, religious, ethnic and other minority groups.

The current study will be conducted in the township of Tembisa focusing on exploring the feelings of people with physical disabilities regarding discrimination.

2. **MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE SUBJECT**

The researcher became interested in exploring the problem because her brother-in-law has a congenital physical disability. She wanted to know

more and gain understanding about the feelings of people with physical disabilities regarding discrimination in Tembisa, in order to help with intervention programs.

The researcher is presently employed at an organization that renders services to people with physical disabilities; hence she is interested in this study. From the researcher's work experience, people with physical disabilities are neglected, isolated, abused and stigmatized by some family and community members. The disabled people in Tembisa experience discrimination because they have difficulty in accessing some public buildings for example, banks, stadiums due to lack of ramps that aid them for mobility, especially the wheelchair users. Nagler (1990:18) also pointed out that people with disabilities were simply relatively isolated, stigmatized individuals.

3. **PROBLEM FORMULATION**

According to the census done in 1996, there are 455,541 people with disabilities in Gauteng. Tembisa has 20,117 people with disabilities and 3,001 people with physical disabilities (Statistics S.A.:1996).

Kilbury, Bordier, and Wong (1996:59) indicated that persons with physical disabilities have experienced a long history of stigmatization and discrimination. Some non-disabled members of the community in Tembisa still attach a stigma towards people with physical disabilities. Barton (1989:10) pointed out that people with disabilities are likely to face exclusion from the workforce because of their perceived inabilities and hence dependency is still created.

As far as education is concerned, people with disabilities lack access to education and educational facilities. Hence a high level of adult illiteracy is marked among people with disabilities. According to the White Paper for

Social Welfare (1997:59) children with disabilities are discriminated against and denied opportunities such as access to education, recreation and public transport.

The study is done to assess the feelings of people with physical disabilities regarding discrimination in Tembisa.

4. **AIM**

The researcher's aim is to attain the following:

To investigate the feelings of people with physical disabilities regarding discrimination in Tembisa.

OBJECTIVES

- To build a theoretical knowledge base through literature study about the phenomenon of physical disability.
- To conduct an empirical investigation into the feelings of people with physical disabilities in Tembisa regarding discrimination.
- To make recommendations to help social workers develop intervention programs for people with physical disabilities.

5. **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The following research question is formulated:

What are the feelings of people with physical disabilities towards discrimination in Tembisa?

6. **RESEARCH APPROACH**

The researcher will use a qualitative approach in this study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:147) a qualitative approach focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings and involve studying those phenomena

in all their complexity. The researcher will explore people with physical disabilities' feelings regarding discrimination against them and derive meaning from their perspective. Fouché and Delpont (2002:79) indicated that a qualitative approach is ideographic and holistic as it aimed to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. They further clarified that it also produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words. Slavin (in Makgatho 2000:21) stated that qualitative research is defined as studying individuals in their natural settings to see the way in which they attribute meanings in social situations.

7. **TYPE OF RESEARCH**

Applied research will be used in this study, because it will focus on practical problems that people with physical disabilities experience and seek solutions to this problem.

Monette, Thomas, Sullivan, Cornell and De Jong (1994:6) indicated that applied research is designed with a practical outcome in mind and with the assumption that some group or society as a whole will gain specific benefits from the research. This refers to people with physical disabilities gaining insight on a problem solving process regarding problems they experience due to their physical handicap. Bailey (in Makgatho 2000:20) indicated that applied research is research with conclusions that can be applied to solve social problems of immediate concern.

8. **RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a blue print, strategy or plan of the whole research project (De Vos and Fouché, 1998:77)

According to Bless and Higson - Smith (1995:63) a research design is the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step. They

further defined it as a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts, - it specifies the unit of analysis, the sampling procedures, the variables on which information is to be obtained, the data collection and measurement procedures and the plan for the analysis of data.

The researcher will use the combination of descriptive and exploratory designs in conducting this study. According to Grinnel (1993:1360) an exploratory study explores a research question about which little is already known. Although this is not a new subject, but it is new in Tembisa as the researcher will be exploring the feelings of people with physical disabilities regarding discrimination in this community.

Grinnel (1993: 153) asserts that a descriptive design is one step closer to determining causality. It usually lacks either random assignment or control over rival hypotheses and sometimes both. A descriptive design will help to give an in depth description of the feelings of people with physical disabilities regarding discrimination in Tembisa.

9. **RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND STRATEGY**

As the researcher will be using a qualitative approach, the data collection method to be used will be semi structured interviewing with a schedule. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2002:302) semi structured interviews are used to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of a particular topic.

They further defined a semi structured interviewing as a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided by the schedule rather than be dictated by it.

Subjects will be contacted individually through home visitations. The criteria to be used in selecting subjects will be heterogeneity, paraplegics and quadriplegics. The subjects will be between ages 18 – 59 years.

The researcher will utilize the general disability register available in the organization, Association for Physically Disabled (APD), in selecting units of analysis. Purposive sampling method will be used to select units of analysis. Bless and Higson - Smith (1995:95) explain purposive sampling as a method based on the judgment of a researcher regarding the characteristic of a representative sample. In purposive sampling, samples are selected because they believed to be able to give the researcher access to some specialized insight or a special perspective, experience, characteristics or condition of physical disability. This sampling method relies more on the subjective considerations of the researcher than of scientific criteria. The researcher will be asking subjects questions and record their responses. Data will be collected and analysed according to themes and categories.

10. **PILOT STUDY**

Hysamen (in De Vos, 1998:179) stated the purpose of a pilot study is an investigation of the feasibility of the planned project to bring possible deficiencies in the measurement procedure to the fore. The advantage of a pilot study is that it will highlight if a measuring instrument needs to be improved before utilizing it in the main investigation.

10.1 ***Literature***

The study of literature in the field of physical disability will help in orientating the researcher on whether literature on the particular subject exists and is freely available. The researcher will focus mainly on recent literature obtained from books, journals, dissertations, thesis, government policy, reports and computerized

databases which are now globally available through the internet regarding the phenomenon of people with physical disabilities.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:108) hold that the review of literature describes theoretical perspectives and previous research findings related to the problem at hand. They further stated its function is to look again at what others have done in areas that are similar, though not necessarily identical, to one's own area of investigation.

According to Strydom (1998:180) the main purpose of the literature study during the pilot study phase remains the broad orientation of the researcher with regard to her investigation and to alert her to certain matters during the main investigation, for example, deficiencies and loopholes in the measuring instrument.

10.2 ***Consultation with experts***

The researcher will consult the following experts:

- Ms A Makgatho, social worker who has worked for over 15 years in the field of physical disability employed by the Association for Physically Disabled (APD) in Tembisa. Contact with Ms Makgatho will be through a personal interview.
- Ms BM Mafoko, a social work manager who also worked for over 25 years in this field of physical disability employed by the Association for Physically Disabled (APD) in the Soweto branch. She will be contacted through a telephonic interview.
- Ms K Papole, a social worker for Department of Health Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) stationed in Tembisa will also be contacted through a personal interview.

Strydom (1998:180) holds that tapping the experience of experts usually offers more advantages than disadvantages. The content of the interview with experts will be sharing their experiences and opinions with regard to the feelings of people with physical disabilities regarding discrimination. The purpose of an interview with experts is to bring an unknown perspective to the fore or reject the researcher's own views. According to Cilliers cited (in De Vos, 1998:181) the utilization of experts can help to delineate the problem more sharply and to gain valuable information on the more technical and practical aspects of the research endeavor.

10.3 ***Feasibility of the study***

Strydom (2002:213) asserted that at this stage of the pilot study, the researcher should address the goals and objectives, resources, research population, procedures of data collection, the data gathering itself, the fieldworkers and possible errors that may occur. They further highlighted that transport, finance and time factors should also be considered.

The study will be conducted in the township of Tembisa where the researcher is a bona fide resident. It will be convenient for her because she is well orientated to the area. The researcher will not encounter any difficulty in contacting the respondents because she is employed at an organization, which renders services to people with physical disabilities. The researcher will incur no traveling expenses. With regard to the time factor, not much time will be consumed, as the researcher knows the area well and can easily access subjects without difficulty. A letter of permission will be obtained from the Director of the Association for Physically Disabled in order to conduct the research.

10.4 *Pilot test of interview*

According to Strydom (1998:179) a pilot study is a process whereby the research design for a prospective survey is tested. It refers to trying out a measuring instrument on a small number of persons having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents. The researcher will select three people with physical disabilities living in Tembisa, and conduct a pilot study by testing out the interview schedule through asking the stated questions. A list of questions will be constructed, whereby the respondents will be asked to answer them. They will be compiled in a semi structured interview schedule, but the researcher will record the subjects' responses.

The respondents will also be asked to comment on the wording of questions, the sequence, possible redundant, missing and confusing questions. The advantage is that it will help the researcher to modify the questions if necessary after the pilot study before the main investigation.

According to Strydom (1998:182) the purpose of the pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation. Space must be given on the interview schedule during the interview or with whatever data collection method is used for criticisms or comments by respondents. The researcher must then carefully consider those comments during the main investigation.

11. **DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH POPULATION, DELIMITATION / BOUNDARY OF SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD**

11.1 *Population*

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:25) defined a population as the entire set of objects of and events of group of people, which is the object of

research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics. It is not feasible to use the whole population in the research study, but the sample must be selected which will be representative of the population. This is supported by De Vos and Fouché (1998:100) who pointed out that most of the time researchers are not able to study an entire population owing to limitations of time and costs, and are obliged to draw a sample. In this study the research population will be all people with physical disabilities who reside in Tembisa Township. It will be those with paraplegia and quadriplegia. The researcher will use the general register of the Association for Physically Disabled, of all people with disabilities in Tembisa. The target population will be heterogeneous i.e. consisting of both males and females with physical disabilities. According to the general register compiled by the researcher, there is a population of about 300 people with physical disabilities in Tembisa.

11.2 ***Sample and sampling method***

Schaefer and Lamm (1992:39) defined a representative sample as a selection from a larger population that is statistically found to be typical of that population. Those people are units of analysis, which have been selected from the whole population.

A sample should have the same characteristics of the population. Strydom and De Vos (1998:191) stated that the larger the population, the smaller the percentage that population needs to be, and if the population is relatively small, the sample should comprise of a reasonably large percentage of the population.

Larger samples enable researchers to draw more accurate conclusions and make more accurate predictions. The researcher will select a sample of ten subjects who will participate in this study. Non-

probability sampling technique will be used. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:88) non probability sampling refers to the case where the probability of including each element of the population in a sampling is unknown i.e it is not possible to determine the likelihood of the inclusion of all representative elements of the population into the sample. The non-probability sampling technique, which the researcher will use, is purposive sampling. According to Strydom and De Vos (1998:198) purposive sampling method is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. The criteria to be used is both males and females, people with paraplegia and quadriplegia between the ages 18 – 59 years.

12. ETHICAL ISSUES

According to Strydom (1998:24) ethics refers to a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects, respondents and employers. Ethical practices help to protect the interests of participants in studies and guard against exposing them to uncondusive research procedures.

12.1 *Harm to subjects or respondents*

It is the researcher's responsibility to protect the subjects from physical or emotional harm. She must be able to anticipate risks before beginning with research such as danger, injury or physical attack on research subjects and assistants. The researcher does not anticipate any physical harm to subjects who will participate in this study.

Emotional harm to subjects entails placing them in stressful, embarrassing, anxiety producing or unpleasant situations e.g. falsely telling people with muscular dystrophy that their disability grants have been permanently discontinued. It is unethical for researchers to harm anyone in the course of research especially if it is without the person's knowledge and permission (Bailey, 1994:454).

The researcher will avoid repeatedly asking respondents questions that cause emotional turmoil by reminding them about the conditions, which rendered them paraplegias and quadriplegias.

12.2 ***Informed consent***

Grinnel (1993:82) indicated that the consent of individuals to participate in a study must be both voluntary and informed. Subjects of study must be acquainted in advance with every aspect of the study and the permission for their involvement must always be obtained via informed consent procedures. It is important for respondents to give permission for participating in the study because the principle of clients' self determination should be respected at all times.

With this study, the researcher will inform the respondents about the aim and objectives of the study. She will also obtain their consent if they are interested in participating. Those who are not interested in participating in the study will be excluded. The researcher will be acting unethically if she includes respondents who are unwilling to participate in this research.

12.3 ***Deception of subjects or respondents***

McBurney (1994:377) indicated that deception involves setting up false expectations of the process under investigation. It also refers to

a situation where the researcher withholds information or offsetting incorrect information in order to ensure participation of subjects when they otherwise possibly have refused it.

No form of deception should ever be inflicted on subjects. If it happens, it should be rectified immediately through debriefing of such subjects if necessary. According to Newman (1997:449) deception is acceptable only if there is a specific methodological purpose for it, and it should be used only to a minimal degree if necessary.

The researcher will disclose the true purpose of the study as being to explore the feelings that people with physical disabilities experience regarding discrimination. She will also state clearly that she conducts research, which will be published at the University of Pretoria, where she is furthering her studies in the field of physical disability. Furthermore, she will indicate clearly that their names will remain anonymous.

12.4 ***Violation of privacy***

The privacy of subjects should not be invaded. The researcher must keep subjects' personal information confidential by not revealing it to other people. The researcher who reveals subjects' personal information will be acting unethically because subjects are promised that information discussed will remain private and confidential. Violation of subjects' privacy is often marked when other institutions, professional organizations are given access to the data collected. Such requests can create serious ethical problems concerning privacy and must be carefully accounted for beforehand and documented with formal contracting. There are instances whereby the researcher may be compelled to breach confidences, for example, in cases where the subject intends to commit suicide, the researcher can reveal those

intentions to either the family members or other health professionals with the aim of saving the person's life.

Strydom (1998:28) holds that the privacy of subjects can be affected by using hidden apparatus such as video cameras, one-way mirror and microphones. Subjects will be interviewed individually and ensure that they remain anonymous by not writing out their names. The researcher will not disclose subjects' information discussed to other people, as that is unethical.

12.5 ***Actions and competence of researcher***

Researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and skilled to undertake the investigation they have in mind (Strydom, 1998:30). They have to clarify reasons for the study and that will help them to produce valid results. They have to be aware of their ethical responsibilities in all procedures followed, for example, sampling procedure, methodology utilized, data processing and research writing. As the researcher will be using qualitative research, she has to make appropriate referrals in case therapy is required. The researcher as a professional has to respect other people's cultures, values and norms. She must not impose her own values on subjects even if they conflict with those of the researcher. The principle of non-judgmental attitude must be adhered to at all times. The researcher will not blame people with paraplegia and quadriplegia about the causes of their disability, especially those due to injury or accident.

12.6 ***Release or publication of the findings***

After the study has been investigated, the researcher will have to compile a research report, which will be published. The respondents will be informed about the findings. It should be clearly written and

contain all the information necessary for readers to understand what has been written down. The researcher should avoid plagiarism because it is unethical to utilize authors' sources without acknowledging them. All sources that the researcher will have used such as books journals, research reports will be acknowledged.

Babbie (2001:527) holds that one should refer to any source, which one has consulted, either directly (through a quote) or indirectly and which has made a significant contribution to one's own work.

Hysamen (in De Vos 1998:33) maintain that it is desirable to present the findings to subjects as a form of recognition and to maintain good relationships with the community concerned in future.

12.7 ***Restoration of subjects or respondents***

After the completion of the study, the researcher may conduct debriefing sessions with subjects if appropriate so that they will have the opportunity to work through their experience and its aftermath. This is another way in which the researcher can minimize harm to subjects.

In this study, subjects may have been treated badly by able-bodied people and feel uncomfortable to reveal their experiences, thus debriefing sessions may be necessary after the study. Some of the respondents may experience difficulty in disengaging with the researcher; she will then need to be sensitive and involve them in informal discussions or refer to other professionals for therapeutic help.

According to McBurney (1994:379) debriefing is a process of informing subjects after the session of experiment's true purpose in

order to increase their understanding and to remove possible harmful effects of deception.

13. DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

13.1 *Disability*

Rioux and Bach (1994:32) defined disability as social restrictions confronted by people with disabilities living in a society that is not organised to take account of their needs.

Hattingh, Harvey, Saayman and Jaarsveldt (1987:2) defined disability as any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity which would be regarded as within the range of a normal person. Disability also refers to the state in which people with handicaps are unable to use their body properly in their day-to-day life due to impairment or missing of other parts of their bodies.

13.2 *Impairment*

Harrison (1987:6) defined impairment as loss of function. Hattingh, et al. (1987:2) refers to impairment as any loss or abnormality of physiological, psychological or anatomical structure or functioning.

Impairment can also be defined as some limitation in the functioning of an individual's body or mental capacity due to congenital, injury or illness.

13.3 *Physical disability*

According to Hattingh, et al. (1987:5) a physically disabled person is an individual who is born with a physical impairment or who has a physical limitation such as anatomical loss of major extremities, paralysis, physiological disorders or any other condition affecting

important body systems, due to illness, injury, accident or age. Therefore, there is limited mobility as well as limitation of one or more of major life activities.

This physical condition is irreversible and will probably continue indefinitely. The New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:45) defined physical disability as a physical impairment either by injury or illness, acquired or congenital, that impedes a person's mobility in varying degrees. Physical disability is a condition whereby a person is unable to use either his/her arms, legs, or their backs do not work the way they should due to injury, accident or illness.

13.4 **Discrimination**

Heller, et al. (1992:246) defined discrimination as making a difference, showing a difference or judging that one thing is different from something else. Bendix (1996:593) indicated that discrimination occurs only when one party is intentionally disadvantaged. This concept refers to unequal treatment that people with physical disabilities get from the society due to their physical impaired status.

13.5 **Rehabilitation**

Frazer (1982:11) defined rehabilitation as the combined and coordinated use of medical, social, educational and vocational measures for training and re-training the individual to the highest possible level of functioning ability. Barker (1991:198) gives the following definition of rehabilitation, as restoring to a healthy condition or useful capacity to the extent possible. Rehabilitation also refers to a process of helping people who have been impaired through injury or disease to utilize their remaining parts of their bodies to the maximum possible in order to be independent.

13.6 **Habilitation**

Habilitation is defined as acquisition of new skills by a person to promote his/her social functioning, especially applicable to the care of the disabled (New Dictionary of Social Work, 1995:30). Barker (1991:99) defined habilitation as a practice orientation that views the client as the social worker's competent and coequal problem solver who is empowered through education, new coping skills and resources.

14. **CONTENTS OF RESEARCH REPORT**

DEFINITION

A research report is a written document that can take the form of a thesis or dissertation produced as a result of procedures undertaken to reveal information.

14.1 **Chapter 1**

- It will consist of an introduction, whereby the topic for study will be briefly explained
- Motivation of the study
- Problem formulation
- Aim (goal and objectives of the study)
- Research procedure and strategy
- Pilot study
- Description of the research population and sampling procedures
- Definition of key concepts

14.2 **Chapter 2**

It will consists of the following:

- Literature study regarding the phenomenon of physical disability.

14.3 **Chapter 3**

Empirical study and a discussion thereof.

14.4 **Chapter 4**

It consist of the following:

- Summary
- Recommendation
- Conclusion

15. **REFERENCES**

The researcher will compile a bibliography at the end of the study, acknowledging all different sources she utilizes in her study.