

Empowering the intellectually impaired to enhance their economic well-being

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This study focuses on a positive stance in seeking to identify opportunities and social welfare for people with intellectual impairment which could pave the way for them to be considered as assets to a country. Currently they are the most marginalized population in a country who are treated as an economic burden. This study aims to identify the feasibility of this group of people being employed and focuses on the factors which hamper them from being a part of the labour force in order to understand the economic complications and experiences faced by them. This study was conducted with two case studies coordinated in a special education school which uses special techniques to make the intellectually impaired capable of being a part of the labour force and a manufacturing plant employing intellectually impaired people. This study was undertaken in order to understand the status of intellectually impaired people in Sri Lanka as there is a lack of research conducted in this area. Through the study it was recognized that there is a lack of quantitative data in the area where data collection or surveys have not been conducted in Sri Lanka in the recent years. This was recognized as a drawback in terms of the field of policy development and decision making because the intended impact of these policies cannot be achieved as they are not backed by valid data. Through the case studies it was witnessed that if proper training and development is provided at the right age of development of intellectually impaired people, they are able to become valuable contributors to the national production of the country. Therefore, there is a strong need in focusing on further developmental measures to enable people with intellectual impairment to become a part of the labour force and to make them capable of contributing to national production while focusing on future research through participatory research, epidemiological and statistical research which could act as the base for fruitful policy developments.

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