

THE BAHAMAS A NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

APPROACHES USED TO MEASURE DISABILITY
THROUGH CENSUSES SURVEYS &
ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCES

BACKGROUND

- The Bahamas is an archipelago of 700 islands and 200 Cays located in the North Atlantic Ocean about 45 miles south of the Florida chain.
- It encompasses an area of about 5,382 square miles and has a total population of 351,461 (2010 Census).
- The population is spread out over 29 inhabited islands with the bulk (70%) residing on the island of New Providence, (14.6%) on Grand Bahama, (5%) on Abaco and the balance (10.4%) spread over the remaining 26 islands.

BACKGROUND -Disability

Contd.

- Prior to the Act, the Disability Affairs Unit within the Ministry of Social Services & Community Development was the Agency that oversaw all matters and concerns related to Disabled persons.
- This Unit was very involved in the planning of the questions to be asked in both the 2000 and 2010 Censuses and offered great feedback and support.
- In fact the Government's Consultant for the Disability Affairs Unit was a member of the local Census Committee.

Background - Legislation

- Legislation on Disability Affairs has been in the making for a long time; however much progress has been made recently as the **Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities) Act, 2014** was enacted on August 12 , 2014.
- **The National Commission for Persons With Disabilities-** was also established and was one of the main provisions emanating from this Act. This Commission is comprised of 15 members drawn from the Public service, civil society and disabled persons themselves and caregivers of disabled persons.

Statistics on Disability: History

- Questions on Disability was first introduced to the Census Questionnaire in 1990.
- This was in keeping with the international recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities as highlighted by the United Nations (UN) declaration “Decade of the Disabled Persons” (1983-1992).
- Many Countries, The Bahamas included, introduced questions aimed at collecting information on the disabled persons.

Statistics on Disability-Sources

- In addition to the Censuses, data on disability has been collected through various surveys undertaken in the Country by various agencies and administrative records, e.g.
- 2001 Living Conditions Survey (DOS)
- 2006 Household Expenditure Survey (DOS)
- 2016 RISE Programme Survey for Persons in the Safety Net Program (Dept. of Social Services)
- However the 2013 Household Expenditure Survey (DOS) did not include questions on disability.
- National Commission for Persons with Disabilities - Administrative Records

Statistics on Disability-Census Questions

Census 2000

SECTION 4: DISABILITY ALL PERSONS

P19. DO YOU HAVE ANY LONG-STANDING ILLNESS OR DISABILITY?

- 1 YES 2 NO (Skip to Q-P24)

P20. WHAT TYPE OF IMPAIRMENT OR DISABILITY DO YOU HAVE?

(TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 SEEING (EVEN WITH GLASSES, IF WORN)
2 HEARING (EVEN WITH HEARING AID, IF WORN)
3 SPEAKING (TALKING)
4 MOVING/ MOBILITY (DUE TO ABSENT OR IMPAIRED LIMB)
5 MOVING/MOBILITY (DUE TO LOCALIZED, PARAPLEGIC, QUAD PARALYSIS)
6 GRIPPING (USING FINGERS TO GRIP OR HANDLE OBJECTS)
7 LEARNING (INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES, SLOWNESS)
8 BEHAVIORAL (PSYCHOLOGICAL, EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS)
9 MENTAL RETARDATION (MILD, MODERATE, SEVERE)
10 OTHER _____

(Specify)

11. = NONE

P21. DOES THIS DISABILITY OR ILLNESS LIMIT YOUR ACTIVITIES COMPARED TO MOST PEOPLE YOUR OWN AGE?

- 1 YES 2 NO (Skip to Q-P23)

P22. IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE YOU HANDICAPPED?

- 1 SELF CARE 5 SCHOOLING
2 MOBILITY/MOVING (WITH THE HOME) 6. = EMPLOYMENT
3 = MOBILITY/MOVING (OUTSIDE THE HOME) 7 SOCIAL EVENTS
4 COMMUNICATION 8 OTHER

9. = NONE

P23. WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF YOUR DISABILITY OR ILLNESS?

1. CONGENITAL/PRENATAL 3. = ACCIDENTAL/INJURY/TRAUMA, INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO GASES, CHEMICALS, ETC.
2 = DISEASES/ILLNESS CONTRACTED 4. = OTHER _____ (SPECIFY)
5. = NOT KNOWN

Census 2010

SECTION 3: DISABILITY ALL PERSONS

Question 1. DO YOU HAVE ANY LONG-TERM DISABILITY?

- 1 YES 2 NO (Skip) 3 NOT STATED (Skip)

Question2. WHAT TYPE OF DISABILITY DO YOU HAVE?

(TICK ONLY ONE, The Main Disability)

- 1 SIGHT ONLY(Totally Blind or Legally Blind)
2 HEARING ONLY (Partially or Totally Deaf, Use of Hearing Aid)
3 SPEECH/COMMUNICATION ONLY
4 LEARNING/INTELLECTUAL (Slowness or Difficulty learning)
5 AUTISM
6 MOBILITY/MOVING (Due to absence or impaired limb)
7 MOBILITY/MOVING (Due to localized paraplegic quadriplegic paralysis)
8 GRIPPING (Unable to use fingers to grip or handle objects)
9 MENTAL DISORDERS
10 MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (Any Combination of the Above Disabilities)
11 OTHER _____

(Specify)

- 12 DON'T KNOW

- 13 NOT STATED

Question 3. DOES THIS DISABILITY LIMIT YOUR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT ANY ACTIVITIES?

1. YES 2. NO (Skip)

Question 4. WHICH OF YOUR ACTIVITIES ARE AFFECTED BY YOUR DISABILITY?

- 1 SELF CARE (Dressing Bathing ETC) 5 EMPLOYMENT
2 MOBILITY (Within the Home) 6 SOCIAL EVENTS
3 MOBILITY (Outside the Home) 7 FAMILY/HOME LIFE
4. SCHOOL?EDUCATION 8 OTHER
9. NOT STATED

QUESTION 5. WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF YOUR DISABILITY?

- 1 FROM BIRTH 4 ACCIDENT (OTHER)
2 DISEASE/ILLNESS CONTRACTED 5 EXPOSURE TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES (GASES etc)
3 ACCIDENT (ROAD) 6 OTHER
7. NOT STATED

Question 6. HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN BECAME DISABLED?

Statistics on Disability-Survey

Questions

2001 Living Conditions Survey (DOS)

- Question 6. IS (Name) PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY DISABLED?
 1. YES PHYSICALLY (Limb)
 2. YES PHYSICALLY (Sight, Hearing, Speech)
 3. YES MENTAL
 4. NO

2016 Rise Safety Net Programme Survey (DSS)

Question 6. Does (Name) Have Any Disability?

1. Yes
 - A. PHYSICAL
 - B. MENTAL
2. No

Renewing, Inspiring, Sustaining, Empowering
(R.I.S.E)

2006 Household Expenditure Survey (DOS)

- Question 6. IS (Name) PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY DISABLED?
 1. YES PHYSICALLY (Limb)
 2. YES PHYSICALLY (Sight)
 3. YES PHYSICALLY (Hearing)
 4. YES PHYSICALLY (Speech)
 5. YES MENTAL
 6. MULTIPLE
 7. NO

Question 7. HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN THIS DISABILITY DEVELOPED?

1. From Birth
2. Under Age 5 Years
3. Age 5-19 Years
4. Age 20-34 Years
5. Age 35-64 Years
6. Age 65 Yers
7. and over

Statistics on Disability

Administrative Sources

- The National Commission for Persons With Disabilities has as one of its main responsibilities, the registration of:-
 - Disabled Persons including those persons who require constant medical attention;
 - Institutions, Associations & Organizations that provide rehabilitation and care for persons with disabilities;
 - Places where the services of rehabilitation & habilitation of persons with disabilities are provided;
 - To co-operate with the Government Agency during the Census or any other survey to ensure, for the purposes of planning, that accurate figures of persons with disabilities in the Country are obtained;
 - To engage or collaborate with any other person/agency to conduct research on or supply information on any matter relating to disabled persons.

Recommendations On Choice of Questions

- In the case of the 2000 Census, the questions were based on the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH)1980, which defines Disability in three dimensions (1)Impairment, (2)Disability and (3)Handicap. It involved much discussions with persons from the Disability Affairs Unit.
- The 2010 Census, however was based on the International Classification of Functional Disability (ICF) which defines Disability as an “umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions”. Again, there was much consultation with the Disability Affairs Unit.

Statistics on Disability-Challenges

- While disability data make it possible to conduct analysis on the disabled population as it relates to their socio-economic, educational, employment and living conditions in comparison to the rest of the population, one must caution users of the data derived from Censuses as it has its limitations as many challenges are experienced during the data gathering.
- As a result it is recommended that census data on the disabled should be used as a benchmark to further conduct more detailed specialized sample surveys.

Statistics on Disability-Challenges

- Some Challenges were:-
 - Overburdening of Census Questionnaire
 - Training of Field Workers for such Specialized Area
 - Probing Required was highly problematic & time consuming
 - Reluctance on the part of respondents to inform of the disability of themselves or other persons in the home.
 - This may result in severe undercounting of the disabled population
 - Definition of disability, handicap & impairment were vague and for the most part subjective

Statistics on Disability-Field Experience

- Interviewers reported that these questions in some cases required explanation as respondents didn't always understand the question.
- In some cases perhaps even the interviewers were not sure of the questions and what they were trying to capture

Statistics on Disability-Reports Available

- 2010 Census- a complete report on Disabled Persons was produced and is available on the Government's website
- 2000 Census- tables were produced and provided to the Disability Affairs Unit. Raw data is still available
- 1990 Census- a limited set of tables was produced for the Disability Affairs Unit

Some Results

- Some of the information presented in the tables is highlighted below in order to provide the user with an instant profile of disability in the country.
- ☒ There were 10,138 disabled persons in the country of which males, numbering 5,250, accounted for more than half (51.8%). With the exception of Bimini, Cat Island, Crooked Island, Harbour Island and Spanish Wells, the number of males with disability outnumbered afflicted females on all islands.
- ☒ By virtue of its size New Providence had the most disabled persons, 6,737, accounting for two thirds of all the disabled individuals in the country. However, as a percentage of the total population on that island, disabled persons accounted for 2.7%. This proportion was significantly lower than the findings in Crooked Island where 7.9% of the population had a disability representing the largest proportion on any of the islands. On Acklins, Long Island and Spanish Wells approximately 6% of the population was reported as having a disability. Inagua, with slightly less than 2% of its population being classified as disabled was the lowest in the country.
- ☒ The most common form of disability was that of lack of mobility due to paralysis or dismemberment which was the reason for almost one quarter of the persons being disabled. For both, males, 21%, and females, 25%, this was the most prevalent form of disability. Blindness and mental disorders were the other major causes of disability accounting for 11.5% and 11% respectively. Of particular interest is the fact that 9% of the disabled population in the country had multiple disabilities.
- ☒ Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the disabled persons were in this condition as a result of disease or some form of illness whilst one quarter of them was born with the disability. An additional 17% were disabled as a result of an accident.
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