

SOCIAL SAFETY NET FOR DISABLED COMMUNITY: AN OVERVIEW TO MALAYSIAN SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This paper is prepared to address the issues pertaining to disabled community in Malaysia. Throughout the world, disabled people are among the least privileged and most vulnerable. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been concerned with the development and the well being of all including those with disabilities. Many countries are recognizing the special needs population's potentials as workers and contributors to society as well as their rights to equal treatment and opportunity.(ILO 1994). Social equity is one of the three main principles for a country's sustainable development. Social equity is achievable when a country fulfills the needs of everyone including those of disabled people. Regards to Malaysian perspectives, lately there is an act was gazetted on January 24, 2008 and came into force on July 7, 2008. Although many commitments have been made to include disability and persons with disabilities in development, the gap between policy and practice continues. Apart from that, although the scale and specificity of issues vary among countries, it is noteworthy that gaps in coverage affect not only the developing country. People with disabilities constitute a large group of the poorest, more than one of six in the least developed countries. The risk of becoming disabled is greater when they are poor, and poverty often lead to disability. All over the world, people with disabilities are made invisible, they are forgotten and overlooked in most contexts although so many acts and regulations had been implemented. The social security programs in Malaysia especially related to "disabled community" need to be carried out effectively by looking at the main objectives which is to provide a better safety social net as well as ensuring that adequate protection is available for this group under the programs. The regulatory enforcement and uniformity of implementation need to be taken into consideration in explaining the success of the policy. Reference to secondary data is the main sources in preparing this article. Records, statistics reports, articles and proceedings are referred to provide substantial justifications of findings. Some recommendations are highlighted in this paper suggesting ways in strengthening the social safety net and implementation in Malaysia mainly towards the disabled community by looking into the role played by government as well as role of second and third sector.

Keywords: Social safety nets, Social Protection, Welfare, Disabled Community

INTRODUCTION

Social security protection is regarded as a basic human right by the United Nation in a macro level approach (McWhinney:2006). Over the years, the issues in social security in Malaysia is always been seen as a secondary issues compared to the economic and political area (Noraini:2006). The social economic scenario in Malaysia is also quite vulnerable in global trends.

Poor population groups in developing countries are for the most part not reached by formal social protection systems. In fact, more than half of the world population is not covered

by any type of formal social protection although most of the population are vulnerable to four main types of risks such as those related to the individual life cycle, economic, environmental as well as social and governance related (Isabel D.Ortiz,2001).

People with disabilities constitute a large group of the poorest, more than one of six in the least developed countries. The risk of becoming disabled is greater when they are poor, and poverty often lead to disability. People from disabilities are frequently excluded from education, and their chances in the labour market are small. Thus, they often become a burden for their family and community, rather than the resource they could have been.

All over the world, people with disabilities are made invisible, they are forgotten and overlooked in most contexts. Making people with disabilities visible, making them a clearly expressed part of any target group, will in many context be the most important mechanism to start a process that will change this situation.

The organization of this paper is organized as follows. The next section will discuss on the concept of social security regards to disabled community followed by constitutional background such as development of policy, legislation and act covered and its practice in Malaysia. The third section will elaborate on several schemes and programmed available in Malaysia concentrating on the role of several government agencies as well as brief comparison with certain countries while section four will discuss on the issues and challenges towards effective social security policy especially regards to safety net and finally section five will provide some recommendations for effective policy. This paper is exploratory in nature which is based on the secondary data as the main source of information.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITION

Disabled person classifies as any person who is unable to obtain for him / her, fully or partially, the normal requirements of an individual and / or is unable to participate fully in the community due to shortcomings either physically or mentally and whether it occurred since birth or later in life. The 3rd of December is declared as the National Day for the disabled person. (<http://www.malaysia.gov.my/>,8/6/2009).

In regards to Malaysia, disabled person could be divided into six categories such as visually impaired, hearing, physical, learning disability, cerebral palsy consist of 170,455 numbers of disabled community through the country (Department of Social Welfare,2006).

Persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society. (Act 685, Persons with Disabilities Act 2008)

CONSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

Development of Protection

According to Social activist, Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, the promulgation of the Disabled Persons Act or People with Disabilities Act would be in line with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights where it would also be in line with the Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons proclaimed by the United Nations in 1975. Under the declaration, disabled persons shall enjoy all the rights without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language, religion, political or other beliefs, birth or any other situation applying either to the disabled person himself or herself or to his or her family. (<http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news.cfm?NewsID=17173>)

Lee further suggested that buildings with public access should be equipped with such facilities such as ramps for wheelchair, signs, disabled-friendly toilets and audio-visuals as well as car parks. According to him, guidelines on building requirements for disabled persons were introduced in November 1999 where existing buildings were asked to incorporate disabled-friendly features in it. So far only about 88 per cent of buildings with public access have complied with the guidelines that were provided for under the Local Government Act's Uniform Building By-Laws 1984.

Recently, according to Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Malaysia will ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in April 2010. In ratifying the convention, the ministry has targeted two areas, mainly accessibility and employment as priorities for this year, she said. She said focusing on these two areas would help people with disabilities to become more independent and also contribute to the country's economic growth.

Malaysia signed the UNCRPD and enforced the Persons with Disabilities Act in 2008. "Several priority areas in issues relating to the rights of persons with disabilities have been identified, and two areas targeted for 2010 are accessibility and employment," (The Sun, Tue, 02 Mar 2010).

Legislation and Act

MALAYSIA passed the [Persons with Disabilities Act](#) (PWDA) in 2008 as part of its obligations under the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (UN Convention). According to the PWDA, those persons with disabilities shall have equal access to the following in Malaysia public facilities, amenities, services and buildings; public transport; education; employment; information, communication & technology; cultural life; recreation, leisure and sport.

Malaysia also amended the "Uniform Building By-Law" in 1990, making it compulsory for buildings to provide access and facilities for disabled persons. Existing buildings were given three years to make modifications to comply with the bylaw.

In efforts to ensure they too lead a comfortable life like the rest, the Government has created guidelines and regulations. These among others include erecting disabled-friendly

buildings, helping in acquiring a home, making a living and other provisions considered pertinent for their welfare.

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) lists some of the legislation governing the well being of the disabled persons, as outlined in its Guidebook on Personal Finance. The legislations are :Sales Tax Act, 1972; Law Reform (Marriage & Divorce) Act, 1976; Married Women and Children (Maintenance) Act, 1950 (Revised 1981) and Inheritance (Family Provision) Act,1971

(a) Sales Tax Act, 1972

It is a well-known fact that the support equipment or devices for the disabled can be very expensive. The Government has exempted sales tax on them, which are classified as medical or educational equipment. By exempting sales tax, the savings will be passed on to the customers. Thus, they become cheaper and more accessible to the disabled. Examples of these equipment and devices are orthopedic appliances, hearing aids and wheelchairs. In addition to the sales tax, disabled persons can also apply for special funds to buy motorized tricycles and other devices from the National Welfare Foundation.

(b) Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act, 1976

It is clearly stated in the Act that upon a divorce, the court will make provisions on the custody and maintenance of the children resulting from the marriage. However, the order will no longer be effective if any one of these circumstances occur: children reach the age of maturity, which is 18 years old; or mentally or physically disabled children no longer suffer from their disability.

With these provisions, the rights of the children, especially disabled ones, are protected. So, if the disabled children are put under the custody of their mother, for instance, she doesn't need to worry on finding extra income to support the children because providing for the disabled children remains the father's responsibility. And if the father intentionally neglects the order, the court can take action against him.

(c) Married Women and Children (Maintenance) Act, 1950 (revised 1981)

Under the Married Women and Children (Maintenance) Act, 1950, the wife has the right to claim maintenance from the husband even before the divorce hearing in the court. And if the wife has mental or physical disability, the court will also take her situation into consideration when issuing the maintenance order. On top of that, if the father fails to provide maintenance, the disabled children can make a request to the court for an order to compel the father to pay for their monthly allowances.

(d) Inheritance (Family Provision) Act, 1971

The Inheritance (Family Provision) Act, 1971 protects the rights of the disabled children should the parents die. According to the Act, the deceased's estate will be reasonably divided among all the dependants. The dependants here refers to an infant son or a son who is, by reason of some mental or physical disability, incapable of maintaining himself and a daughter who has

not been married or who is, by reasons of some mental or physical disability, incapable of maintaining herself.

The Act further explains that if the deceased's will does not provide sufficient maintenance to these dependants, they have the right to request for the provisions to be given out differently to what has been stated in the will. Apart from these laws, the ACCA notes that there is a host of other incentives specifically created for the disabled as well. Among them are :

Housing

To lessen the burden of owning a house, the Government, through Syarikat Perumahan Nasional Berhad (SPNB) is giving a price discount of 20 percent to disabled persons under the low income category. This is to help them buy low or medium-cost houses.

Education

To reduce the financial burden of parents with disabled children, a monthly allowance is given to every child attending school. Disabled students in primary and secondary schools are allocated RM25 each and RM300 for those studying at the institutions of higher learning.

Transportation

Up to 50 percent discount on tickets is given to the disabled to help them be mobile. Among transportation companies which provide such services are Malaysian Airline (MAS), Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB), Transnasional and Syarikat Prasarana Negara. On top of that, the disabled are also exempted from paying road tax. However, it is only applicable for locally made vehicles. And they are also given a 50 percent discount on Government duty on all locally made vehicles.

Communication

To ensure equal access to the nation's telecommunication system, Telekom Malaysia through its Caring Package (Pakej Penyayang) offers free monthly rental and free telephone enhanced facilities, which include call waiting and call transfer services to disabled persons. To enjoy the benefits, however, the disabled person beforehand must register with the Social Welfare Services Department (JKMM). JKMM in return, will issue a Disabled Person identity card, which would make them eligible for the many benefits.

Setting up business

Disabled persons are given a launching grant amounting to RM2, 700 for the purpose of starting up a business. There are also additional grants for business expansion. The Association for the Blind encourages entrepreneurial spirit when it established a network of franchise shops, giving opportunity for the blind to run their own business. There are many incentives given to the disabled are designed with the purpose of reducing their financial dependence on others and more importantly, to help them lead a meaningful live. Thus, the welfare of the disabled in Malaysia is well taken care of and they need not worry over their rights and opportunities.

Table 3.2: Summary of Acts & Provision regards to Disabled Person

ACT	DESCRIPTION	YEAR
Married Women and Children (Maintenance) Act, 1950 (Revised 1981)	the court will make provisions on the custody and maintenance of the children resulting from the marriage	1950
Inheritance (Family Provision) Act, 1971	protects the rights of the disabled children should the parents die.	1971
Sales Tax Act, 1972	support equipment or devices for the disabled (tax exemption)	1972
Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act, 1976	the court will make provisions on the custody and maintenance of the children resulting from the marriage (upon divorced)	1976
Uniform Building By-Laws 1984	Which stipulate that all public buildings must have adequate facilities to ensure that persons with disabilities can enter, move around within and exit such buildings. These by-laws have been gazette in all 11 states in Peninsular Malaysia, but compliance with such by-laws remains to be seen in most buildings	1984
Act 685 Persons with Disabilities Act 2008	An Act to provide for the registration, protection, rehabilitation, development and well being of persons with disabilities, the establishment of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, and for matters connected therewith.	2008

AVAILABLE SAFETY NET FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN MALAYSIA

The role of protecting the welfare and benefits for the disabled community in Malaysia can be found in various ministries and agencies. In the same time, the role of corporate responsibility as part of strategic management among corporate and private sector also increasing. Nevertheless, the non-governmental organization or pressure group also participate in promoting, championing the issues of disabled people.

Role of government department and agencies.

There are various ministries involve in providing benefits to disabled people in Malaysia. The frontier department is the National Welfare Department under the ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. This function is assisted by various ministries and Department like Ministry of Health, Ministry of Human Resource, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Housing and Local Government etc.

For the purpose of this paper, the protection available for disabled people will be classified into several categories as follows: the detailed information will be explained through table 3.2.

a) Financial allowance

Government provides safety net protection for disabled community by providing in-cash transfer for the qualified disabled people whom unemployed or unable to work, families with disabled and disabled employees. They will receive monthly allowance according to the qualifying conditions.

b) Medical assistance and rehabilitation

This benefit is provided by Ministry of Health for disabled in-terms if they are admitted to the hospital for free treatment, and specialist and medicine. Apart of it, there is also a rehabilitation benefits provided by JKM. In this scheme, the beneficiaries will receive a prosthetic assistance.

c) Training and education

There are numbers of institutions established to provide training for disabled person like Taman Sinar harapan. This training center meant to develop skills among disabled particularly enable them living independently without constant attendance by other people in their daily activities. Other than that, government also provides training center for industrial and rehabilitation in Bangi to encourage disabled in venturing small business industry. In-kind benefits which no charge and fees.

In terms of education, various assistance provided by Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education for disabled in cash allowance for students in primary and secondary school, as well as tertiary education. The amount of allowance is varies from one level to another and basically paid monthly, or by semester.

d) Employment and income generation programmes

A person with disability who's employed in any organization will have special job coach to facilitate their need in workplace and to be assigned with appropriate job. Ministry of Human Resource in collaboration with public and private sectors provides services of job placement for disabled people who registered and seek for employment. In government department, parents with disabled child will be given a flexible working hours in case of nursing their child.

Government also concern about disabled people in terms of their socio-economic condition. Thus, Launching Grant and Busoness Encouragement Grant for Disbaled People (Geran Galakan Perniagaan OKU) for person interested to do small business or already operating a business. The assistance will be paid lump-sum to the qualified recipient.

e) Community support

Community support means the support system provided by JKM for disabled people and their families in terms of consultations, about the available right, protection; counseling and advice on how to take care and nurse the disabled people. The organization like Day Care Center, Community Based Rehabilitation Center will assist these people with free services.

f) Others

Other than assistance mention above, there's also benefits and special treatment for people with disabilities in transportation like road tax exemption, discount rate for public

transport; low rental house and discount for house purchase,; special package for subscribing in telecommunication and tax exemption individual and parents with disabilities.

However, those benefits mentioned above usually require the disabled people / beneficiaries to register with JKM to entitle them to receive the benefits. The benefits are ranged either for disabled people or family as the social safety net for Malaysian.

Table 4.1: Social Safety Net Programme for Disabled People

CATEGORY OF ASSISTANCE	BENEFICIARIES	ASSISTANCE & COVERAGE	AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE	IMPACT PERIOD	IMPLEMENTING AGENCY
Financial allowance	Unemployed and unable to work person.	BTB ó Unemployed Disabled	RM 150	Monthly	JKM
	Families whoø taking care of patient with household income not more than RM3,000 Registered with JKM Income not exceeding RM1200 Disabled employees	Bedridden / Chronic care assistance Income maintenance Disabled Employees Allowance	RM300	Monthly	
Medical	Disabled person	Early intervention for Welfare institution admission	Free	Lump sum	Ministry of Health
		3 rd class ward, specialist fee, medicine fee	Free	Lump sum	
Rehabilitation	Registered with JKM and unable to purchase the prosthetic	Prosthetics assistance	Depending on the price	Lump sum	JKM
Training	Disabled person	Taman Sinar Harapan	Depending on the duration of stay in the institute	Depending on the duration of stay in the institute	JKM
		Industrial & rehabilitation training Center, Bangi Independent Living			

Employment	Disabled person	Bengkel Terlindung Job Coach	-	-	JKM JKM JPA
	Parents with disabled child	Flexible working hours			
Income generation	Person interested to do small business	Geran Pelancaran Launching Grant	Max RM2,700	Lump sum	JKM
	Disabled person who already operating a business	Geran Galakan Perniagaan OKU	Depending on qualification	One-off	MoHR/jabatan Tanaga Kerja
Education	Disabled School students	Special School, Integration program, Inclusive program.	Nil	Nil	Education Department
	Primary & secondary school disabled students	Financial allowance	RM150	Monthly	MoE
	Tertiary education disabled students	Financial assistance	RM300	Monthly, but paid according to semester basis	MoHE
	Hearing disabled students in Politeknik and Kolej Komuniti	Financial assistance	RM33600		MoHE
	Disabled people	Special channel for university application admission		By Semester	MoHE
Community Support	Disabled person and families	Counseling, consultation, advice	Nil	Nil	JKM
		Day Care Center, Bukit Tunku			JKM
		Disability Equality Training			JKM & JICA
		Community Based Rehabilitation			JKM & MoH

		Center			
Others - transportation	Physical disability	Road tax exemption Discount rate for Bus, air and trains fares 50% exemptions from transport excise duty	Nil	Nil	JPJ and Ministry of Transportation
- facilities		Building ó ram & railings, lift, ways, parking, toilet	Nil	Nil	Ministry of Housing and Local Government Local Government Council
- Housing		Low rental house rate Discount 20% for house purchase	Nil	Nil	DBKL Ministry of Finance, Sykt Perumahan Negara
- telecommuni- cation	Disabled person above 18 year old	Pakej Penyayang : free monthly fees, 103 services etc for residentø telephone	Nil	Lump sum	
- tax exemption	Employers who employed and train disabled workers Parents with disabled child Disabled person, parents with disabled child, or child with disabled parents Disabled person Disabled person spouse	Doubled tax exemption Tax exemption up to RM5000 Tax exemption up to RM5000 for purchasing the equipment Tax exemption of RM6000 Tax exemption of RM3500	Nil	Nil	

Disability protection in other countries

Mitra (2005) has stated that, the main difference between developed and developing country in disability policy is in terms of the definition. Developed countries usually refers disability screen that assess activity limitations (e.g limited ability to work), whilst developing countries tend to apply impairment screen (eg, inability to hear, see). This different definition will directly or indirectly influence the policy formulation and response towards needs of disabled people in particular country. In most developing countries, disabled people are usually considered to be the responsibility of their families and only limited assistance from the other sectors (Elwan, 1999).

The introduction of national law and strategy protecting disabled people in Malaysia is considerably new compared to other countries. In Japan, the Basic Law for Person With Disabilities was enacted in 1993. They also come out with 5 years strategic plan to improve the protection. Germany however, was started the protection back to 1994 in Basic Laws, and Social Code Book IX in 2001. However the specific act pertaining to disabilities was enacted with Federal Disability Equality Act in 2002, and General Equality Act in 2006.

There is a shift in most countries either developed or developing countries in the 1990s from universal benefits to highly targeted transfer, which focused at the poor with disabilities and their households and to be evaluated by means-test and disability test (Mitra, 2005) like the United States, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Mauritius and Malaysia.

With regard to livelihood support, all countries strongly encourage disabled people to work. However, the support system by the government policy as well as willingness of the private and corporate sector to employ persons with disabilities need to be taken serious consideration. In Malaysia, the government has set the rule of to employ 1% of disabled people in all public sectors department/agency (Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Bil. 10/1988), and provide incentives or tax exemption for private sectors that employed disabled people.

Japan, through The Law for Employment Promotion make a regulation for enterprises employing regularly at least 56 workers is required to employ physically or intellectually disabled persons equivalent to 1.8% or more of the workforce since 1998. These requirements are supplemented by a levy-and-grant system, which is designed to subsidize employers who provide job opportunities for the disabled by collecting a levy from those who do not fill their employment quota.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

There are significant issues and challenges pertaining to the disabled people in developing countries especially Malaysia.

Enforcement

The United Nations estimates that one person in 20 has a disability and about 80 percent of disabled persons live in developing countries (UNDP, 2009). The lack of enforcement in terms of protection given to the disabled become a major concern in most developing countries

including Malaysia. Even though many programmes have implemented for the disabled in Malaysia but The Persons with Disabilities Act just took place in 2008. After more than two years of implementation, the roles of this act is still questionable. It seems like The Persons with Disabilities Act is not applied in protecting the rights and dignity of the disabled people. This is because disabled people in Malaysia still face attitudinal and environmental barriers in every aspect of their lives (The Star, 2010).

OKU Card

The government estimates that there are about 1.3 million people with various forms of disability, yet only 233, 939 of them have registered with the Welfare Service Department (Bernama, 2009). This shows that the awareness on the importance of having the *OKU* card is still lacking as the registration for the card is not compulsory and parents are not forced to do so (UNESCO, 2009). This explained that, those who have not registered will not be able to enjoy the benefits and incentives that supposed to be given to them. Failure to register also will cause the lack of a comprehensive database on disabled people in Malaysia. In another issue, the responsibility of the Welfare Department is also being questioned as there were cases whereby the application made was not received any response (The Star, 2010).

Poverty

Another issue associated with the disabled people is poverty. There is a strong, complex and tangible relationship between poverty and disability (Chacko, 2008). In most societies in developing countries, disabled persons are among the poorest of the poor (UNDP, 2009). There are many contributing factors that cause the disabled to live in poverty. Lack of access to training and employment as well as income generating activities has forced the disabled into poverty (Takamine, 2004).

Poverty also takes place when the main breadwinner of the family becomes disabled and has devastating effect on the whole family (Yeo, 2001). This incident will definitely give great impact to the other family members. Meanwhile, it is also reported that environmental conditions such as lack of access to proper nutrition, lack of necessary health care and medication, absence of sanitary installations, contamination of the air, soil and drinking water are connected to poverty and causing disability (Grut and Ingsted, 2005).

Employment

Employment is also one of the major issues faced by the disabled persons. The study carried out by Faridah (2003) the rate of employment for people with disabilities in Malaysia is significantly lower than the non-disabled counterparts. This is due to the lack of implementation of the 1% employment policy for disabled people in the public sector and the reluctance to provide employment despite the incentives available in the private sector (Sinnasamy, 2006). Even if they were employed, they regularly are faced with various forms of interpersonal social isolation, including being ignored and excluded from daily events (Lori et. al, 2009).

In another issue, the research carried out by Perry et al. found that many persons with disabilities have difficulty securing and maintaining employment (Karen S. Markel & Lizabeth A. Barclay, 2009). It is apparent that an overarching concern among employers has been that the costs associated with hiring people with disabilities will outweigh the benefits. These perceived

concerns with costs include the provision of expensive accommodations, decreased employee productivity and increased supervisory time (Marielle et. al, 2008). This is proved that employers are seldom ready to give due considerations to the fact they may need specialized support services, assistive devices or even job modifications and are not willing to make reasonable accommodations for their needs (WorldEnable, 2007).

Accessibility and Transportation

Disabled communities are still facing obstacles in their daily life. In Malaysia, the disabled continue to face limited choices on where they are able to go and how they will get there as public transportation remaining accessible. Due to the obstacle, they are unable to access basic services such as health care, education, training, employment and retail services (Chacko, 2008). This shows that, the inefficient transportation system would cause great impacts to the life of the disabled people. The lack of access to the public transport can cause them to highly depending on their friends and family for assistance (Tootelian and Gaedeke, 2000).

The other issue is regarding on the accessibility of the disabilities to public services and buildings. In Malaysia, even though the by-law stipulated that all public buildings must be provided with access for the disabled persons, but when it comes to the implementation, there is a lack of seriousness in meeting the required provision of accessible features in public buildings (UNDP, 2001). In reality, some of the government offices do not have proper ramps for wheelchair users, and for some of those that do, the wheelchair ramp is far from the main entrance (The Star, 2010).

Education and Training

The other issue raised is about the access to education by persons with disabilities. Education is the foundation for the development of the disabled. A dominant problem in the disability field is lack of access to education for both children and adults with disabilities (Susan, 2007). There were also cases whereby children with certain disabilities are fit to study in public schools but they cannot grab the opportunity because schools are not physically equipped to enroll them (Bernama, 2006). To prove this situation, there were comments from parents noting the lack of facilities in government schools for students with special needs (The Star, 2010). It is also reported that the lack of skillful teachers in special education areas is one of the difficulties faces by the government in creating inclusive education systems for the disabled children (UNESCO, 2009).

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the concern of disabled people in Malaysia already in place from formal and informal social safety nets programmes. The establishment of specific act and regulations of this group is a wise step taken by the government as it will specifically address the issues pertaining to people with disabilities. Despites the various programmes developed and designed to ensure their welfare are well protected fairly and adequately, the multisectoral synergy and collaboration from government, private sector (employer), non-governmental organization as well as public are essential for better social safety nets for people with disabilities, so that this will ensure they are not marginalized from social and economic development in Malaysia.

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