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'Albinos in Nigeria suffer discrimination'

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Persons living with the skin pigmentation problem want government to pay more attention to their welfare

ARTICLE | FEBRUARY 27, 2011 - 6:46AM | BY YUSUF ZANGO

Jake Epele, the President of the Albino Foundation of Nigeria, says more than 600,000 persons living with skin pigmentation problem in the country suffer discrimination

"Some families abandon newly born children with albinism," he said. "Due to this, an albino has a slim chance to make it in life with most parents reluctant to invest in the education of

albino children."

He said statistics indicated that more than 1.5 million Nigerian albinos were among the poorest, least educated and marginalised persons, adding that these persons were also the most susceptible to skin cancer due to frequent exposure of their skin to the sun.

"Their poverty and lack of education are not as a result of mental or physical disabilities but mainly as a result of discrimination, social exclusion, stigmatisation and sometimes human rights abuse they suffer," he said.

He described **albinism** as a hereditary condition which shows an absence or lack of the dark pigment, melanin, in the skin, hair and eyes.

"Every Nigerian has a right to education," he said. "The plight of albinos to live a healthy life must be addressed effectively. Albinos have their peculiarities and should be included in an all inclusive education policies. The federal, state and local government should draw up educational plans to cater for the needs of the albinos in schools and sensitise the teachers on albinism."

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