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Albinos Call For Special Attention



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The Ghana Association of Persons with Albinism (GAPA) has called for greater attention from the public and policy makers to their plight, resulting from their condition as disables.

The group made the appeal during a lecture on the theme, 'Albinism: the myth and the reality', saying that the Disability Act 715, focused on the physically impaired, inadvertently discriminating against the mentally challenged and albinos.

The condition is characterized by the absence of the melanin pigment in the skin, eyes and hair resulting in eye and skin defects.

Prof. Edmond Nninyem Delle, Director of Rabito Health Ltd and lecturer at the University of Development Studies said though albinism affects people of all races, with an estimation of 1 in 20, 000 persons having some form of albinism.

Affected persons within Africa turn to face diverse forms of social discrimination, mostly due to the myths and ignorance.

"Traditionally, it's a taboo or a curse to give birth to an albino in certain parts of Africa. Some people believe that having an albino is a result of bewitchment in the family"

Albinos, Prof. Delle said, face discrimination regarding equal rights to quality education, adequate healthcare, marriage and political will.

'Some of the myths which result in the above, he mentioned include an assertion that albinism results from premature birth or that the condition is a curse from the gods of a community,' he said.

Again, albinos are believed to vanish and not die. The life threatening myth is that the anatomical parts of albinos are good for wealth creating rituals, a situation which has cost the lives on many albinos, owing to the selfish desires of individuals.

"Since the mystification of albinism is a universal phenomenon, stigmatization against albinos should be regarded as an international human right problem," Prof. Delle argued.

Unfortunately, he added, the mysterious killings have caused apprehension among the albino community as they now feel very insecure under the circumstances.

He cautioned against the repetition of the Tanzanian situation, where belief in the magical efficacy of their body parts resulted in the death of many.

There was a "high demand for albino skins in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and DR Congo where it sold for between US\$ 134.40 and US\$ 537.60."

He added that the solution to ritual murder of albinos lies in the strict enforcement of deterring legislations and public campaign on the reality pertaining to albinism.

"The general public, especially those in traditional communities should be made to understand that albinism is a ubiquitous problem caused by natural conditions."

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