

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Study
School of Social Work

**Exploring Academic Barriers to Students
with Disabilities at Addis Ababa University
main campus**

By: Dawit Tessentu

June, 2014

Addis Ababa

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis
Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Approved by Board of Examiners

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ACRONYM

AAU: Addis Ababa University

ADA: American with Disability Act

CHE: Council of Higher Education

CFDRE: Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FOTIM: Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis

WHO: World Health Organization

HEI: Higher Education Institutions

ICT: Information Communication Technology

ILO: International Labour Organization

MOE: Ministry of Education

NPAPWDs: National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities

PwD : person with disabilities

SwD : students with disabilities

SENDA: Special Educational Needs and Disability Act

UK: United Kingdom

USA: United States of America

UNESCO: United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN: United Nation

UPIAS: Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation

WHO: World Health Organization

Abstract

The study aims to explore barrier to education for students with disabilities at Addis Ababa university main campus. A quantitative research employing a census or complete enumeration method was used to explore the major barrier students with disabilities face during their education at AAU. To this effect, a quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires from 289 students with disabilities studying at the main campus of AAU. The finding of the study found a number of major barriers to education for students with disabilities. It was found that, SwD face barrier to education because of; negative attitude 78.9%, lack of educational material 66.1%, physical inaccessibility 46.4%, financial limitation 69.9%, uncooperative faculty member's 49.1% inaccessible library and classroom building 81.8%. Student also experienced disability-related barriers in teaching and learning process these includes examination 64%, getting information 53.3% assignment 77.9%. Accordingly, policy responses, advocacy and awareness raising, financial support, course and lecture modification, provision of adequate assistive technology and educational material, mainstreaming disability issues in all departments and faculties, equipping disability center with adequate material are recommended.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Recent increase in higher education institutions in Ethiopia is creating an increase in the numbers of students with disabilities joining higher education institutions in Ethiopia (Tirussew et al., 2013). Education provides for personal, social and economic growth and it enables persons with disabilities to develop their skill and realize their full potential. Education is an international human right, essential to the life of individuals and community at large. Article 24.5 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Person with Disability which is ratified by Ethiopia in 2010 (UN, 2007) mandates all ratifying states to ensure equal access to education for person with disabilities it states that:

States parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, states parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities. (P.15)

Unfortunately, there are many barriers to education for Persons with Disabilities (PwD), preventing them from realizing their full potential. According to World Health Organization (2011) the most frequent barriers Student with Disabilities (SwD) face while entering higher education institutions includes: Physical barriers, attitudinal barriers, lack of university wide legislation that will benefit SwD, inadequate resources such as braille book, class room with inadequate material.

According to Jah (2007) barrier to education for students with disabilities can be viewed in physical as well as the curriculum, the examination system that wouldn't respond to the diverse needs of students. Tirussew (2005) asserts that, lack of an inclusive educational setting which tries to address the special need of SwD is the main challenge for most of students with disabilities at higher education institutions.

It is clear that there has been a considerable effort nowadays to make Higher education institutions a barrier free and inclusive for all. Barrier makes education difficult and denies students the opportunity to fully participate in educational activity (Ferneeuw, 2005; OECD, 2011). According to Tinklin & Hall (1999) higher education institutions not only should identified and removed obstacles , but higher education institutions should seek ways to address the challenge of how to celebrate and embrace differences amongst students.

Legislation change is promoting equality of opportunity for people with disabilities in higher education institutions in several countries (Goode, 2007). In many countries, there are disability policies that attempt to eliminate the obstacles and barriers to education for PwD and in fact many higher education institutions in the developed world have a policy for removing barriers and providing reasonable and accessible accommodation to its students (Vickerman & Blundel, 2010). For instance in UK the Equality Act (2010) enforces all educational service providers to make a reasonable adjustment to SwD and to avoid discrimination against any services. In USA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) applies to almost all colleges, universities, and schools. The laws mandate an equal opportunity for students with disabilities, they are entitled to benefit from all the services of those institutions without any discrimination and have the right to get reasonable accommodation.

Adams and Brown (2006) asserts that, the effort to make higher education intuitions barriers free originate mainly from the fact that there is a considerable emphasis by the government to widen participation of students with disabilities in higher education institutions. These policies have lead in improving significantly the experiences and the service provided to SwD in higher education institution (Adams and Brown 2006).

Despite the expansion of higher education in Ethiopia, access for education for students with disabilities is still negligible. Furthermore, the conditions for students with disabilities in higher education intuitions, is neither encouraging nor supportive (Yared, 2008; MoE, 2010 cited in Tirusew et al., 2013). A study by Chernet and Endrerud (2004) on The Development of Special Needs Education in Ethiopia indicates that despite substantial numbers of SwD in higher education intuitions in Ethiopia, the provision of Special Needs Education for students with disabilities is extremely limited.

In Ethiopia, there is no specific disability related policies for higher education institutions. To fill the gab caused by the lack of policy MOE had developed strategy for Special needs education with the goal of ensuring access to education for students with special educational needs (MoE, 2006). In addition Article 41 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995) also gives some legislative support for assistance of PwD. It states that “*the State shall, with available means, allocate resources to provide rehabilitation and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled*” (p.5). In addition the Ethiopian National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities NPAPWDs (2012) presents a plan for enabling Ethiopia to become a more inclusive society. It addresses the needs of PwD by providing a comprehensive rehabilitation service, equal opportunity for education, skills training and work. Beyond these

initial attempt to provide basic rehabilitation services and some legislative recognition there is no policy or legislation that attempts to solve the problem of SwD in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

Data pertaining to the number of students with disabilities at higher education intuitions in Ethiopia is not accurate and very limited. According to study by UNESCO (1997), in 1997 there were around 136 SwD out of the total enrollment of 8200 at Addis Ababa University. Most of these SwD are male students, with Physical, visual and hearing impairments as the main type of disabilities. World Vision indicate that there are around 250 blind students in higher education institutions in Ethiopia, and that Addis Ababa University has 183 blind undergraduates and postgraduates students (World Vision, 2007, cited in Lewis, 2009). ILO (2011) on the other hand indicated there are 450 disabled undergraduate students at Addis Ababa University. A recent statistics by Belay (2012) indicates that there are 347 students with disabilities enrolled at the undergraduate programs in various disciplines at Addis Ababa University.

Most of students with disabilities joining higher education institutions in Ethiopia have a major problem of getting accessible and barrier free educational services; this in part can create a high degree of barrier on their education. It is difficult for students with disability to succeed on their education without a barrier free education (Yared, 2008). Addis Ababa University didn't have any distinct policy with regard to SwDs. Although there is some improvement in recent year to make higher education institutions a barrier free for students with disability, there are still a number of challenges for most SwDs to get a barrier free education. Based on the above premises, this study mainly aims at exploring and describing the main barriers that SwDs encounter in their education at Addis Ababa University main campus.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

It is clear that SwDs face several challenges and barriers while joining higher education institutions. Many studies have discussed the difficulties that SwDs face in their higher education institutions, for instance Adams & Brown (2006) identified a number of barrier SwD faces: they lack personal support they used to get previously from their family in the new environment thereby creating a very difficult situation to adjust with, adjusting to new learning system, physical inaccessibility, institutional support barriers, attitudinal barriers from faculty and students, cumbersome and time-consuming accommodation processes, negative attitudes and stereotypes, difficulty to access equipment are some of a few barrier they face while joining higher education institutions (Adams & Brown, 2006; Jhonson, 2006; Moon et al, 2012; Alqaryouti, 2010).

In many ways, the barriers that have been encountered by students with disabilities are mainly a result of lack of specific policies and support to protect the rights of SwD (Matshedisho, 2007). Barrier free education aim to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity for all the benefits of higher education (Adams and Brown 2006; OECD 2011). Providing barrier free service to SwDs to gain full access to education and university facility will make higher education more inclusive and accessible. Kuching (2011) and Alqaryouti (2010) asserts that to make higher education accessible and barrier free higher education institutions has a responsibility to restructure its programs to include; provision of assistive devices, academic accommodation, supporting aids and services, modification of the classroom and campus environment, sign language interpreters developing awareness raising about disability, developing positive attitude, among others.

Barrier free education will help students with disabilities to be successful in their education and significantly expand their opportunity to access the various educational services given at higher education institutions. Higher education institutions has a responsibility to make education for SwD a barrier free by solving actual and perceived barrier confronted by students with disabilities (Adams and Brown 2006).

When we see Ethiopian higher education institutions there is no data on condition of students with disabilities. According to Yared (2008) Ethiopian public higher education institutions have no significant provision for students with disabilities, the physical, academic and classroom environment in Ethiopian higher education institution merely provides accessible accommodation for teaching and learning process. Among Ethiopian higher educational institutions Addis Ababa University has relatively large number of students with disabilities and a better service than other Ethiopian higher education institutions. Addis Ababa University has also one disability service center, Yared (2008) explains that the Center of Disability Services is preparing to offer a number of services to students with disabilities, including educational assessment and intervention; student support service such as tutoring and counseling, administrative support, life centered career development, education knowledge support for college faculty to accommodate the need of students with disability.

Beyond this initial development there is still a limited academic service that is barrier free and accessible for most of students with disabilities at Addis Ababa University. Therefore, this research tries to explore academic barriers faced by students with disability at Addis Ababa University main campus.

1.3. Research Questions

The study tries to answer the following questions.

- How much barrier free is Addis Ababa University education for SwD?
- What are the major barriers encountered by SwD in their education at AAU?
- What effort does the university make in identifying and removing obstacles and barriers of education for SwD?
- What are the disability related policy or program that aim at solving the problem of the education of SwD?

1.4. Objectives of the study

General Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to explore barriers to education for SwD at Addis Ababa University, main campus.

Specific Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study include:

- Identify the major barriers to education students with disabilities faces at Addis Ababa University.
- Assess the academic problem faced by SwD at Addis Ababa University.

- Examine the possible source of barrier to education for students with disabilities and recommending possible solution to solve it.
- Describe existing university's policies, if any, and investigate their practicality.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study will be important for several reasons.

- It will help to explore the main barrier to education students with disabilities face at higher education institutions.
- It will inform policy maker to formulate disability friendly educational policy that will help the inclusion of students with disabilities at higher education institutions.
- Benefiting persons with disabilities is benefiting the nation and it is also a social justice and human right issues. So the study is important to answer and see whether the university is providing barrier free education to students with disabilities or not.
- The study will also serve as a source of future research on the issue.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study is limited in its scope and coverage; it is limited to studying students with disabilities at Addis Ababa University main campus (6killo). In addition it is limited to studying only students with hearing, physical and visual impairments, who study in regular programme. Furthermore it is also limited in studying academic barrier only and doesn't include other non-academic barrier students with disabilities faces at AAU.

1.7. Operational Definitions

Disability: an individual who (a) has a physical or mental impairment that limits the individual's life activity, (b) has a record of such impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such impairment. The impairment may be visible or invisible, permanent or temporary in nature (ADA, 2011).

Reasonable accommodation: means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN, 2007).

Accessible: refers to a site, facility, work environment, service, or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, and/or use safely and with dignity by a person with a disability (ADA, 2011).

Barrier-free environment: A barrier-free environment is a space that allows for free and safe movement, function and access for all, regardless of age, sex or condition. A space or a set of services that can be accessed by all, without obstacles, with dignity and with as much independence as possible. The environment means buildings, roads, parks, gardens and other places, services, modes of transportation, products of daily use, etc (Handicap international,2004).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Understanding and Defining Disability

The concept of disability is a highly contested issue and there is no clear definition of disability globally. The commonly cited definition of disability is that of World Health Organization (1980), according to this definition;

In the context of health experience, a disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. (p.28)

Another definition is the one forwarded by American with Disability Act (1990) according to this definition disability is:

(A) A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (B) a record of such an impairment; or (C) being regarded as having such an impairment. (p.7)

According to the UN standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities (1993), disability is further defined as follows:

The term "disability" summarizes a great number of different functional limitations occurring in any population in any country of the world. People may be disabled by physical, intellectual or

sensory impairment, medical conditions or mental illness. Such impairments, conditions or illnesses may be permanent or transitory in nature. (p.6)

Another way of understanding disability and the associated concepts is through the two dominant perspectives or models of disability. The first and the oldest way of understanding disability and its associated attitude is the medical model of disability. This model argues that disability is an individual medical problem. Under the medical model, PwD is seen as dependent and need to be cured or cared for. It focus its attention on the nature of the person's impairment and the degree to which this impairment may or may not prevent the person to carry out a particular activities and participating in various activities that is regarded as normal to other (Fulcher, 1989; Bricout et al., 2004). Critics argues that the medical model of disability only focus on the physiology of the impairment and the perceived deficit of the person rather than the societal and the environment barrier faced by disabled people that prevent them from reaching their full potential. Opponent of this model argues that this model of disability contributed to ongoing discrimination and marginalization people with disabilities (Brisenden, 1986; Council of higher education, 2005). Council of higher education (2005) describes the medical model as:

They focus, for example, on the nature of a person's spinal injury rather than on the physical barriers that limit his or her mobility as a wheelchair user, or on the degree of a person's deafness rather than on accommodating the use of sign language as the language of communication and instruction for that person. (p.2)

By focusing on impairment and the degree to which a person cannot undertake various activities in the normal way they give little attention to the issues of discrimination and barriers people with disabilities face (South African Human Rights Commission, 2002).

Another most recent disability model developed by people with disabilities themselves over the past 20 years is the social model of disability. This model started with the publication of *The Fundamental Principles of Disability* by the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS), a UK disability right organization in 1976, it states that:

In our view it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. (UPIAS, 1976, P.14 cited in Oliver, 2004)

The publication of this article turned the understanding of disability completely. The social model of disability argues that it is the society that imposes disability on people. According to this model, disability is a social construct, which is created by society by imposing restriction and barrier to the full participation of persons with disabilities (UPIAS, 1976; Bricout et al., 2004; Oliver, 2004). The focus of this model is on the nature and organization of society and its response to people with disabilities, rather than the nature and extent of individual impairment (UPIAS, 1976; CHE, 2005). In recent year, the social model of disability has been increasingly accepted and adopted by disability group all over the world (Barnes, 2005).

In the higher education institution's context the proponent of social model of disability argues that the exclusion and under representation of SwD in higher education institution is the consequence of the social marginalization of SwD (Riddell and Banks, 2001). They argue that in broadest sense the social model of disability is about environmental, cultural and economic barriers people with disabilities faced in higher education institutions (Oliver, 2004).

2.2. Overview of Disability in Higher Education Institutions: the Global Context

Traditionally very few students with disabilities reach higher education levels, however due to the expansions of higher education institutions and the adoption of various policies to help students with disabilities to succeed in their studies, the number of students with disabilities joining higher education institutions is increasing globally (OECD, 2011). One of the key catalysts in increasing the participation of students with disabilities in higher education institutions is the emergence of government policy and various international instruments and treaties (Adams and Brown, 2006). These include the UN Declaration on Education for All (1990), the UN Standard Rules on equalization of opportunity for person with disabilities (1993), World Education Forum, Dakar (2000) and UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (2006). These international initiatives and documents have played an important roles to promote the right and participation of students with disabilities in higher education institutions in various countries worldwide (Kochung, 2011).

Much has been changing in recent years with regards to disability in higher education institution, however studies with regards to provision of education for SwD in higher education institution are far less common and the few available studies are mostly individual pieces research (OECD, 2003; Vickerman and Blundell, 2010). Until recently disability was seen as an individual medical problem in higher education institutions, it is now widely regarded as an equal opportunity issues (Fuller et al., 2004). According to Almog (2011) most of SwD face many academic and social barriers. The ideas of focusing on barrier experienced by SwD in higher education institutions rather than focusing on individual impairments comes mainly from the

social model of disability (Fuller et al.,2004). Furthermore the use of the concept barrier in relation to students with disabilities in higher education institutions was established by previous works (Baron et al., 1996; Tinklin & Hall, 1999, cited in Fuller et al., 2004).

However, in the past two decades there is a significant improvement in the way higher education institutions view the issues of SwD. In recent years, higher education providers are becoming increasingly aware of the need of SwD in order to ensure they have equal access to the range of learning, teaching, assessment, physical and social opportunities on offer (Ferne and Marcus, 2006; McIlveen et al., 2005 cited in Vickerman and Blundell, 2010). However according to Riddell (1998) and Fuller et al. (2004) whilst progress has been made during the last few years there are still much work to do.

While there are a large number of students with disabilities joining higher education institution, these institutions are not well prepared to accommodate students with disability. This is mainly because of the fact that, those institutions are modeled mainly based on traditional educational model that serves only non-disabled students (Kochung, 2011; Adams and Brown, 2006). Historically this kind educational model has the potential to exclude and limit the full participation of person with disabilities in higher education institution (FOTIM, 2011). Students with disabilities face barrier in higher education institution not only because of their impairment but also because of the lack of effort by higher education institutions to tackle barrier caused by environment, policy, attitude alongside a lack of commitment by higher education institution to extend the opportunity open to the rest students (Vickerman and Blundell, 2010)

Moreover despite some improvement in recent year students with disabilities face a significant number of difficulties compared to other students in in higher education institution. students with

disabilities lag behind their non-disabled classmates in academic attainments this is mainly caused by inequality inherent in higher educational system, the way higher educational system is structured and, the institutional and academic barrier they face in higher education (Fuller et al, 2004; Hall and Stahl, 2006). Students with disabilities pose particular challenge to higher education institutions, because they need a much adjusted and wider physical, academic, teaching and learning environment compared to non-disabled students (Tinklin & Hall, 1999).

Although the educational system in higher education institutions has a potential to support a greater participation of students with disabilities, barrier still remain (Tinklin & Hall, 1999). For example in many higher education institutions SwD face barrier related to curriculum, teaching and learning, negative attitude, low awareness, lack of assistance, in assessment, because of physical inaccessibility (Vickerman and Blundell, 2010; Goode ,2007; Tynan, 2005; Tinklin & Hall,1999; Fuller et al, 2004). Thus, unless higher education institution recognize and understand the needs of SwD and demonstrate a willingness to accommodate those need it would be easy to think that policy and legislations alone is insufficient to effect change (Barnes, 2005; Butterwick and Benjamin, 2006 cited in Vickerman and Blundell, 2010).

2.3 The Policy Climate and Its Context to Higher Education institutions

Policy is a powerful tool to change and regulate a complex social problem. Over the past twenty years various international instruments and government policy have stimulated the learning experience of students with disabilities by removing barrier in higher education institution (Horejes, 2013). The enactments of various international and national policy related to disability has contributed in increasing the enrolments and experience of students with disabilities in higher education institution (Healey et al, 2006). Thus, the aim of this topic is to explore the

international policies that significantly contributed in improving the teaching and learning experiences of SwD in higher education institutions.

Within the past two decades, the international community has begun to understand that violations of the rights of people with disabilities are violations of human rights. This was revealed by drafting various policy and legislation pertaining to disability. The first and most important of these international treaties is UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities 2006, adopted by UN general assembly. Article 4, of this landmark treaty guarantee all person with disabilities the right to equality, dignity, and liberty, and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of their rights, to equal access to justice, and to equal participation in public and cultural life (UN, 2006, p.5-6). Article 9 of this convention also obliged state parties to make appropriate measure to ensure person with disabilities to live independently, to participate fully in all aspects of life and to ensure access of facility and services open to all on an equal basis with others (UN, 2006, p.8). Articles 24.5 of this convention also guarantee persons with disabilities to get tertiary education without discrimination of any kind it states that:

States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities. (p.15)

Another most important document that help in promoting the right of persons with disabilities to an inclusive education is the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action adopted by UNESCO on World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994 .This framework assists to promote

the approach of inclusive education as the main strategy for genuine equalization and full participation of person with disability in mainstream education. It advocates the integration of children and youth with special need in inclusive school, so that they can achieve the fullest educational progress and social integration (UNESCO, 1994).

More specifically policies from central government and local governments have also contributed much in promoting the right of SwD in higher education institutions; it has contributed to enhance the opportunities and access to physical, social, learning and teaching service for SwD (Riddell et al., 2005 cited in Vickerman and Blundell, 2010). The emergence of government policy has widened the participation of SwD in higher education institutions it has led in improving significantly their experience overtime (Adams and Brown, 2006).

The development of public policies regarding the direct access to higher education by SwD has been a major driving force for the increasing participation of SwD in higher education institutions (Konur, 2007). For example, in USA Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) and the American with Disability Act (1990) prohibits discrimination based on disability in all institution, including collage and universities. Under this act college and universities are required to provide equal opportunity for students with disabilities, it also mandates educational institutions to provide academic accommodation and to remove barrier to education for SwD (ADA, 1990; Rehabilitation Act, 1973). In UK the change is stimulated by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and later through Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) (2001) which require educational provider to ensure reasonable measure and to avoid discrimination. The new Disability Discrimination Act (2005) will further require higher education institutions to make reasonable adjustments in advance for the needs of SwD and to

produce disability equality statements (Healey et al., 2005). Another important example is the Australian Disability Act (1992) which imposes a duty on higher education institution to make adjustment to ensure that students with disabilities were not discriminated in applying and education in higher education institutions (Adams and Brown, 2006).

The needs and rights of students with disabilities as learners in higher education have been officially recognized in many countries. Australia, the USA and Israel, for example, all have legislation concerning the integration of SwD in to higher education (Fuller et al., 2004). Within this legislative context many universities have developed their own disability policy that promotes equality for SwD and to address the discrimination they face at higher education institution. These policies set out how the university will promote equality, provide adjustment to its service for students with disabilities and staff alike. This is especially true for most of European and American higher education institutions; they try to ensure that their disability service offerings are clearly visible to current and potential SwD by formulating disability policy (FOTIM, 2011).

2.4 Major barriers to education for students with disabilities

Students with disabilities face multiple barriers when entering higher education institutions, yet relatively little research has been carried out to identify the kind and nature of such barriers. There is substantial evidence that SwD confront multiple barriers in higher education institutions (Baron et al., 1996). Thus, the aim of this section is to try to highlight some of the major barrier to education students with disabilities encounter in higher education institutions.

Adams and Holland (2006) describe that SwD face additional barrier when entering higher education institutions. Some of the barrier may be physical inaccessibility, problem in accessing

curricula, organizational, behavioral and attitudinal. For example, recent UK research (Riddell et al., 2002) indicates that even when Students with disabilities start out with comparable qualifications to other students in the same university, they nevertheless tend to encounter more barriers to learning and achieve poorer outcomes in terms of final degree classification. A survey on the educational experience of 44 SwD in England identified barriers in course attendance and attitudinal level resulting in underachievement in their education (Preece, 1995, cited in Baron et al., 1996).

A study by Baron et al. (1996) on barrier to training for disabled social work students within a number of social work training institutions in Scotland identified barrier in five main areas: first, there is the disabling physical environments; the way the institutional building designed present an obvious barrier to the student; second, there is problem of typification: categorizing SwD based on their specific disability which creates stereotypes; third: they identified failure of equal opportunity policies by institutions; fourth, they identified the practice of treating all students in the same way resulting in discrimination against a few; fifth, self-censorship on the part of the students: the reluctance of some students to declare their disability (Baron et al., 1996).

A research by Tinklin and Hall (1999) on the experience of SwD in Scotland higher education institutions identified five areas where students with disabilities face barrier in higher education institutions; first, there is the in-accessibility of physical environment; Secondly, accesses to information especially for blind and deaf students are difficult; third, entrance to higher education for SwD can be more complicated; fourth, assumption of normalcy: SwD face difficulties because they are operating in academic environment that work without regard to their

disability; fifth, level of awareness student's experiences with the member of the staff they came in to contact has its own impact on the experience of the students in higher education institutions.

A study by Fuller et al. (2005) in UK universities on the experience of SwD in higher education identified that, close to 50% of students identified barrier in taking lecture and 43% barrier in field work. The nature of the difficulties SwD identified varied but included issues involving attendance, note taking, participation, confidence, concentration, and the longer time it takes them to complete tasks. Similar study also identified that barriers are more prevalent in assessment, examination, course work, assignments, difficulties taking notes, the amount of time taken on reading and completing assignments (Fuller et al., 2005). A similar study by Cawthon and Cole (2010) points out that SwD experienced barrier on obtaining learning and teaching services at university, because of unwillingness by faculty member to accommodate their needs and on getting a test setup.

2.5 Overview of Disability in Higher Education Institutions: the Ethiopian context

This section tries to highlight the data that are available on SwD and the general situation of Students with disabilities in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

In Ethiopia higher education institutions is expanding; however, the participation of students with disabilities in higher education institution is still very small. (Yared, 2008; MoE, 2010). The condition of students with disabilities in higher education institutions in Ethiopia is not changing; almost all of students with disabilities face serious barriers in their education. In higher education institutions students with disabilities get assistance from their peers and individual teachers who

have good will. Except Addis Ababa University there is no organized form of support for SwD in Ethiopian Higher education institutions (MOE, 2006; Yared, 2008).

There is no statistical data on the number of students with disabilities in higher education institutions in Ethiopia. According to the estimate provided by Yared (2008) the proportion of students with disabilities is less than 0.5% of the total student population in most of Ethiopian higher education institutions. A study by UNESCO in 1997 points out that; there were around 136 students with disabilities in Addis Ababa University. Most of these SwD are male students, with Physical, visual and hearing impairments as the main type of disabilities (UNESCO, 1997). World Vision indicate that in 2007, there were around 250 blind students in higher education institutions in Ethiopia from these Addis Ababa University had 183 blind undergraduates and postgraduates students (World Vision, 2007, cited in Lewis, 2009). Yared (2008) points out that the numbers of students with disabilities are estimated to be about 500 out of 30,000 in Addis Ababa University and around 50 out of 10,000 in Bahirdar University. ILO (2011) on the other hand states that there were 450 undergraduate SwD at Addis Ababa University in 2011. A recent statistics by Belay (2012) indicates that there were 347 students with disabilities enrolled at the undergraduate programs in various disciplines in Addis Ababa University. At Addis Ababa University the main types of disability that is reported by student are: visual impairment, orthopedic/physical and hearing impairment (Yared, 2007; UNESCO, 1997).

2.6 Overview of the Legal and Policy Framework in Ethiopia

The government of Ethiopia has developed a number of legislation and ratified many international treaty and convention pertaining to disability with the aim of benefitting person with disabilities to get equal access in every service. Among these legislative and policy tool

developed the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995) is one of the main legislation that sets out state responsibility pertaining to person with disabilities. Accordingly, FDREC In its Article 41(5) states that “*the State shall, with its available means, allocate resources to provide rehabilitation and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled*” (CFDRE, 1995, Art. 41, p.5). Developmental Social Welfare Policy (1997) also specifically targets people with disabilities and sets out to safeguard their rights and to promote opportunities for vocational rehabilitation (Tirusew et al., 2013). The National plan of Action of Person with Disabilities 2012-2021 (2012) set out to address the need of persons with disabilities in Ethiopia by providing a comprehensive rehabilitation service, equal opportunity for education, skill training and work , and full participation in life of their families, community and nation (MOLSA, 2012).

Ethiopia has also ratified various international treaties and instruments pertaining to disability. These include:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and Optional Protocol. Status: ratified, 7 July 2010.
- Ethiopia also works to implement the Action Plan established for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, extended to December 2019.
- ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983, (No. 159). Status: ratified, 28 January 1991.
- Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993, and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994 (adapted from ILO, 2011 and Lewis, 2009)

With regarding to a written university policy related to students with disabilities almost all public and private higher education institutions of Ethiopia have no written policy that aim to address the need of students with disabilities. Although AAU has included under its University-Wide Strategic Plan for 2008–2013 some plan to make all building space and ICT resource accessible to students with disabilities beyond this initial plan there is no policy pertaining to students with disabilities in most of Ethiopian higher education Institutions (ILO, 2011; Yared, 2008; UNESCO,1997).

2.7 Facilities and Provision for Students with Disabilities in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions

A study by UNESCO (1997) on students with disabilities at universities in Africa with the main objectives of gathering information on the situation of SwD in African universities describes that the majority of participating universities have little or no facility for SwD. For example AAU which was one of the participant universities from Ethiopia had minimal provision for students with disabilities at that time.

There is no accurate data on the facility and services provided to SwD in Ethiopian higher education institutions at present. A study by Yared (2008) points out that, with the exception of Addis Ababa University there is no attempt to accommodate the need of students with disabilities in Ethiopian higher education institutions. Addis Ababa University has a newly opened disability service center. The center gives service ranging from minor adjustment to counselling services that targets students with disabilities. It also provides students with physical and visually impairment some financial support, computer and laboratory training. The disability center at AAU also offer help in transcribing scripts in to braille, provide study paper and

produce enlarged photo copy. A study by Yared (2008) indicates that Bahirdar University has general student counselling and guidance service for students with disabilities.

A study by Tirussew et al. (2013) on the condition of employment of graduates with disabilities in Ethiopia shows that from a sample of 192 SwD in five Ethiopian higher education institutions about 54.4% of students responded that they have got an assistive device and other material from their university. On the other hand 45.6% of the students responded that they didn't get any assistive device and other support from their university. With regard to modification made for students with disabilities about 67 (45.3%) responded that modification were made for students with disabilities at their university ,while more than half of the respondent 81 (54.7%) said that there were no modification made for students with disabilities at their university.

2.8 Major barriers to education for students with disabilities in Ethiopian higher education institutions

Although there is limited study on the barrier SwD face in higher education institutions in Ethiopia, available study shows that students with disabilities face many barriers to their education. A study by UNESCO (1997) identified the major barrier encountered by SwD at Addis Ababa University include: shortage of equipment such as braille book, braille paper, tape recorder, volunteer reader especially for blind students. Physical and building in-accessibility was the main barrier for students with physical impairments. A recent study by Yared (2008) and ILO (2011) describes some of the major barrier faced by SwD include: physical inaccessibility, shortage of equipment, lack of elevator, lack of personal assistant, lack of sign language interpreter, lack of educational equipment such as braille paper. The study also revealed that the faculty member and other academic staff are unaware of disability need and support.

A recent study by Tirussew et al. (2013) identified the following barrier students with disabilities encountered in higher education institutions in Ethiopia.

First, there is barrier related to inaccessibility of buildings and classrooms, lack of elevators, car parking modes act as barriers. Second, there is barrier related to negative attitude of university community towards students with disabilities. Third, barrier related to inadequate resources for learning: text books and reference materials not available in braille, no adequate slate and styles ,lack of hearing aid ,inadequate books, reading materials, tape/voice recorders, scanners,. (p 41)

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employs a quantitative descriptive method. Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way. A descriptive design is selected because of its high degree of representativeness and the ease in which a researcher could obtain the participants' opinion (Polit & Beck, 2004). Based on the data obtained from AAU's Disability Center there are around 375 students with disabilities in all of Addis Ababa University campuses in the current running academic year of 2014. From these 289 students with disabilities studying at the main campus of Addis Ababa University were selected for the research using census or complete enumeration method of survey.

3.2 Sampling Techniques

Since the numbers of students with disabilities at Addis Ababa University main campus is small, it creates difficult situation to select a sample from such small groups of people, so the researcher decided to use a census or a complete enumeration method for this study. According to Morris (2004), Israel (2013) and Johnson and Christensen (2011) a census is an attractive and efficient method to study small populations (e.g., 300 or less). It eliminates sampling error and provides data on all individuals in the population. Finally, virtually the entire population would have to be sampled to achieve a desirable level of precision.

3.3 Study Area and Target Group

The study setting is Addis Ababa University main campus. The target participants of the study are students with disabilities studying at Addis Ababa University main campus (Sidist kilo). Based on the information obtained from AAU's Disability Center the majority of students with disabilities are categorized in three types of disabilities at AAU. Thus, the researcher selected participant only from students who are visually impaired, physically impaired and hearing impaired. The researchers also make utmost effort to include available women with disabilities at the main campus in all of the three disability categories to make the research a more representative.

3.4 Instrument and process of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was mainly used to collect firsthand information from the target students with disabilities. Prior to the design of questionnaires an in-depth literature review, which served as a basis for the development of the data-collection instrument, was made. After the design of the main questionnaires the questionnaire was pre-tested, before the final survey questionnaire was distributed to the target students. After the developments and correction of the final questionnaires using feedback received during the pretest it was distributed to students with disabilities by three data collectors and the researcher for seven days. Data from those with hearing impairment were collected by trained data collectors who know sign language well. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, the data collectors have received adequate training to make them familiar with the questionnaires. For the other two disability category i.e. visually impaired and physically impaired students, the questionnaires were distributed by non-disabled students as a data collector. The data collectors were supervised by the researcher during data

collection to get reliable information from the Participants, and to minimize error during data collection.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data was checked for completeness and internal consistency of responses manually. After the data was checked for completeness and edited for consistency, it was then entered into computer using SPSS version 20 as instruments of data entry and data analysis. After the data was entered it was analyzed using frequency to generate descriptive statistics.

Descriptive statistical methods were mainly employed to describe the data. The principal aims in employing descriptive research are to describe the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of particular phenomena (Travers, 1978). Thus frequency and percentage were mainly used to write the findings of the research and to show the major barrier to education students with disabilities face at Addis Ababa University.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Background Profile of the Participants

Based on data obtained from AAU's Disability Center there are 375 students with disabilities in AAU campuses. From these a total of 289 available students at Addis Ababa University main campus participated in the study. The researcher interviewed all of available visual, hearing and physically impaired students during the seven days of data collection time. Hearing impaired and physically impaired students with disabilities interviewed in this study exclude those students that study at other campus of AAU.

Table 4.1 Participants of the study by types of Disability

Type of Disability	Frequency	Percent
Hearing impaired	76	26.3
Visually impaired	169	58.5
Physically impaired	44	15.2
Total	289	100.0

As can be seen from table 4.1, a total of 289 students with disabilities participated in the study. Out of this number, students with visual impairments constitutes the largest proportion 169 (58.5%) followed by students with hearing impairments 76 (26.3%) and physical impairments 44 (15.2%) respectively.

Table 4.2 Disability type and sex of respondents

Type of Disability	SEX				Total	
	Female	Percent	Male	Percent	Total	Percent
Hearing impaired	10	13.2	66	86.8	76	100
Visually impaired	45	26.6	124	73.4	169	100
Physically impaired	8	18.2	36	81.8	44	100
Total	63	21.8	226	78.2	289	100

When aggregated by sex and disability type, the representations of female students with disabilities are smaller 21.8% compared to male students 78.2%. The numbers of female students with disabilities are higher for visually impaired student 26.6% followed by physically impaired students 18.2% and hearing impaired students 13.2% respectively. This shows that the participation of female students with disabilities is much smaller at AAU compared to male students with disabilities.

Table 4.3 Academic support received from AAU by students with disabilities

Do you get any academic support from the AAU?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	177	61.2
No	112	38.8
Total	289	100

Respondents were asked whether they have received any kinds of academic support from Addis Ababa University because of their disability or not about 61.2 % students replied that they have received at least some kinds of academic support from the university while 38.8% students said that they did not receive any kinds of academic support from Addis Ababa University. This may be because of the

fact that some of students who participated in this research are postgraduate students and some may not be registered at disability center.

4.2. Assistive Technology

To assess the provision of assistive technology a question was posed to participant to access whether they have been provided with any assistive technology services at Addis Ababa University or not.

Table 4.4 Assistive technology provision for students with disabilities at AAU

Do you get any assistive technology from AAU?	Frequency	Percent
Not	67	24.5
Yes	206	75%
Total	273	100

Table 4.4, depicts that the majority of respondent 75 % said that they have received assistive technology such as computer service, braille paper, tape recorder, cassette, hearing aid, wheel chair and other assistive technology from AAU. On the other hand 24.5% of the student replied that they have received none of assistive technology during their education.

Table 4.5 provision of Assistive technology by Disability types

Provision of assistive technology by disability type	Hearing impaired		Visually impaired		Physically impaired	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Not at all	30	39.5	21	12.4	16	57.1
Yes	11	14.5	22	13	4	14.3
Yes Sometimes	35	46.1	126	74.6	8	28.6
Total	76	100	169	100	26	100

Assistive technology provision at Addis Ababa University was also examined by disability type; the result showed that 74.6 % of visually impaired students replied that they have sometimes received assistive technology service from AAU followed by hearing impaired 46.1% and physically impaired 28.6% respectively. Contrary to those who said they have sometimes receive assistive technology 57.1% physically impaired, 39.5 % hearing impaired and 12.4% visually impaired student replied that they haven't received any kinds of assistive technology from AAU. However, around 14.5% of hearing impaired, 14.3% physically impaired and 13% visually impaired students said that, they have received adequate assistive technology service from AAU.

Table 4.6 Adequacy of Service provided for Students with Disabilities at Addis Ababa University

Adequacy of service provided for SwD at AAU	Frequency	Percent
Adequate	3	1.1
Somehow adequate	63	22.3
Not adequate	217	76.7
Total	283	100

As indicated in table 4.6 Respondents were asked whether the service provided by Addis Ababa University for students with disabilities were adequate or not. The majority of student with disabilities or about 76.7% answered that the service provided by the AAU for students with disabilities is not adequate at all. A limited number of students or around 22.3% said it is somehow adequate. Only 1.1% students said the service provided by AAU for students with disabilities were adequate. It is possible to say that; based on the response of students with disabilities the provision provided by AAU for students with disabilities are not sufficient enough and need improvements. Even though student said the service provided by AAU is not adequate based on information I gained from disability center shows that there is improvements on the major services provided by AAU Disability center some of improved services include providing guidance and counselling, providing training on various topic for SwD, Prosthetic material support for physically impaired students, monthly and annual financial support, educational material support, human assistance, accessibility.

Table 4.7 Major barrier to education for students with disability by disability type

What is the major barrier to education you have encountered at Addis Ababa university?	Disability type							
	Hearing impaired		Visually impaired		Physically impaired		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Physical inaccessibility	-	-	71	42	40	90.9	134	46.4
Financial limitation	11	14.5	149	88.2	42	95.5	202	69.9
Negative Attitudes	49	64.5	145	85.5	34	77.3	228	78.9
Lack of Educational material	34	44.7	130	76.9	27	61.4	191	66.1

Students with disabilities were asked to indicate the major barrier to their education in Addis Ababa University. The majority of respondents 78.9% said negative attitudes were among the major barrier to education they experienced at AAU. It is closely followed by financial limitation 69.9%, lack of educational material 66.1% and physical inaccessibility 46.4 % respectively.

Financial limitation has created a major problem on education of students with physical impairment around 95.5% reported that, they have experienced financial problem followed by students with visual impairments 88.2%. Physical inaccessibility of campus building, class room, library and road by far create barrier to education mostly for those students with physical impairments 90.9 % of respondent said physical inaccessibility of campus created barrier to their education. The majority of students with visual impairments 76.9% said that they have a lack of educational material which create barrier to their education. 85.5% of students with visual impairments also reported that they have experienced negative attitude from students and faculty member. Negative attitude from students, faculty member and university community also create barrier to education for most of students with physical impairments 77.3%, followed by students with hearing impairments 64.5% respectively.

An accessible campus environment creates positive learning experience for students with disabilities and it will also reduce the barrier they will face during their education (Adams and Brown, 2006). In the present study students were asked whether the inaccessibility of campus and academic facility create a barrier to their education 50.2% respondents said that the inaccessibility of campus and academic facility has created barrier to their education while 49.8% of respondents said that inaccessibility of campus and academic facility didn't create any barrier to their education.

Table 4.8 Academic Barrier caused by Disability

Do you face academic barrier at this university because of your disability?	Frequency	Percent
Yes always	97	33.9
Yes sometimes	147	51.4
Not at all	42	14.7

Being students with disabilities may affect the ability of students to undertake a course at higher education institutions (Tinklin & Hall, 1999). Students were asked if they faced any academic barrier at Addis Ababa University caused by their disability their response showed that about half or 51.4% replied they face academic barriers because of their disability after they entered AAU. While 33.9% of students said that they have always faced academic barrier because of their disability after they entered AAU. Only small number of students with disability about 14.7% indicated that they have never faced any academic barrier because of their disability at AAU.

Table 4.9 Barriers encountered from faculty members

What is the main barrier you have encountered from faculty members?	Frequency	Percent
Uncooperative faculty members	142	49.1
Negative attitude	160	55.4
Reluctant to give support	178	61.6

According to Baron et al. (1996) discriminatory attitudes and being not aware of the requirements of individual students with disabilities can create barrier to education for students

with disability. In the present study it was found that 55.4% of students with disabilities said that they have encountered negative attitude from faculty members. Whereas 61.6% said that lecturers were reluctant to give them support they needed like course material, adjustments of assignments and field work based on their disability need. About 49.1% students with disabilities said the faculty members were uncooperative to them.

Table 4.10 Barriers encountered from faculty members by types of disabilities

What is the main barrier you have encountered from faculty members?	Hearing impaired		Visually impaired		Physically impaired	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Uncooperative faculty members	21	27.6	89	52.7	32	72.7
Negative attitude	32	42.1	106	62.7	26	59.1
Reluctant to give support	28	36.8	122	72.2	20	45.5

When disaggregated by disability type 72.2 % of visually impaired students said that they have faced unsupportive and reluctant faculty member to give them support they need like reference book, power-point notes, handout and other course material. About 72.7% students with physical impairment have encountered uncooperative faculty member and about 62.7% of students with visual impairments have encountered negative attitude from faculty members. By contrast barrier students with hearing impairments encounter from faculty member are lower than the two types of disability. On average students with hearing impairments encountered about 35.5% of barrier from faculty members by contrast visually impaired students encounter 62.5% of barrier from faculty members and physically impaired student encounter 59.1% of barrier from faculty

members. This implies that students with visual impairments faced more barriers from faculty member than other types of disability in AAU.

Table 4.11 Parts of teaching and learning that create academic barrier for students with disabilities

Teaching and learning parts that create barrier for SWD	Hearing impaired		Visually impaired		Physically impaired		Total	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Lecture	27	35.5	22	13	0	0	49	17
Examination	46	60.5	129	79.1	6	13.6	181	64
Getting Information	29	38.2	123	72.8	2	4.5	154	53.3
Assignment	57	75	145	87.9	20	45.5	222	77.9
Learning resources	50	68.5	145	85.8	8	18.2	203	71

In table 4.11, parts of teaching and learning process that creates more barriers for students with disabilities were examined the finding shows that about 64% of students said examination has created major barrier to their education. Barrier created during taking examination was higher for students with visual impairments 79.1% followed by students with hearing impairments 60.5%. Barrier related to course structure create barrier mostly for students with visual impairments around 75.1% of students reported that they have problem with course structure and the way course material is delivered. Around 68.2% Students with physical impairments have also reported experiencing barrier related to course structures and the way course assessments was done.

The way the lecture is given create barrier mostly for students with hearing impairments. 35.5% of students with hearing impairment said that because of lack of sign language interpreter they have difficulty understanding lecture. The way lecture has given create little barrier for students

with visual impairments, only 13% of students reported that lecture has created barrier in their education. Interestingly students with physical impairments have no problem in relation to the way lecture is delivered.

Students with disabilities need to get various kinds of like academic schedule, various notice from department, instructor that is posted on notice board, exam schedules, information delivered at class room. Students with disabilities were asked whether they have faced barrier in getting information 53.3% of students said that they have faced problem of getting various academic information. Getting information for various academic purposes creates more barriers for students with visual impairments than other types of students with disabilities. A majority visually impaired respondents 72.8% said that they have encountered problem of getting information.

Doing assignments which require field work, extensive literature review, data collection, movement from one place to other create much barrier for SwD. In the present study the majority of respondents about 77.9% said that doing assignments has created a major barrier in their education. Doing assignments create a major barrier for visually impaired students 87.9% followed by students with hearing impairments 75% and for students with visual impairments 45.5% respectively.

Using learning resource such as lecture note, handout, reference book and copied material from various sources create a major barrier to education for students with disabilities (Goode, 2007). The majority of participant about 71% of said that using learning resource have created barrier in their education. Using learning resource has created sever barrier for students with visual impairments than other types of disabilities. About 85.5% of students with visual impairments

reported that using learning resource that is prepared for non-disabled students has created major barrier in their education

Table 4.12 Support given by faculty member for SWD

In general, how supportive did you find your faculty member to be regarding disability issues?	Frequency	Percent
Extremely supportive	10	3.5
Moderately supportive	195	68.9
Not supportive at all	78	27.6

The study has also attempted to examine how supportive were faculty member towards students with disabilities regarding disability issues. It was found that 68.9% of respondents said faculty member were moderately support regarding disability issues. 27% of respondents indicated that the faculty members were not supportive at all. Only 3.5% students said the faculty members were extremely supportive regarding disability issues.

Table 4.13 Adequacy of the skill of teaching and administrative staff to deal with students with disabilities

Are teaching and administrative staff adequately equipped and trained to deal with students with disabilities?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	63	22.3
No adequately trained	89	31.4
Not trained at all	131	46.3

Furthermore, when we assess how adequately teaching and administrative staffs' were equipped and skilled to deal with students with disabilities .About 46.3% students said the teaching and administrative staffs' weren't skilled at all to deal with students with disabilities. On the other hand 31.4% of students said that the skill and expertise of teaching and administrative staffs' to deals with disability issues was not adequate. Contrary to the above mentioned response around 22.3% of respondents said that the teaching and administrative staffs' were adequately equipped and trained to deal with students with disability.

4.3 Library

Students with disability need special provision inside library. Library has to be accessible for use by students with disabilities. Some students like visually impaired need special room with special braille book and assistive technology, other need accessible physical environment such as lift, ramp and assistance inside the library to get book and other material (Tinklin & Hall, 1999).

Table 4.14 Barrier faced in using library because of their disability

Have you faced barrier in using library because of your disability?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	134	49.3
NO	138	50.7

As can be seen from table 4.14 students with disabilities were asked whether they have faced barrier in using library because of their disability about half of the respondent or 49.3% said that they have faced barrier in using library caused by their disability and about 50.7% said the haven't faced any barrier in using library caused by their disability .

Table 4.15 Effort by library to provide service in accessible format for SWD

Does the library make effort to provide service in accessible format for students with disability?	Hearing impaired		Visually impaired		Physically impaired		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	30	41.1	42	25.8	4	10	76	27.5
NO	43	58.9	121	74.2	36	90	200	72.5

When it comes to whether the library makes effort to provide service in accessible format (e.g. material in Braille, audio, or on soft copy to be used by computer) about 72.5 % of students replied that the library make no effort to provide service in accessible format. Majority of students with visual impairment or 74.2% and physical impairments 90 % said that the library make no effort to provide service in accessible format for students with disabilities.

Table 4.16 Assistive technology provided by library for SWD

Does the library provide assistive technology for SWD?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	139	51.3
NO	132	48.7

Assistive technology can enhance the experience of students with disabilities in their education. Regarding whether the library provides assistive technology for students with disabilities or not about half of the respondents or 51.3% said the library provide assistive technology while about 48.7% of respondent said the library didn't provide any assistive technology. Most of students said that even if the library provides assistive technology it is very limited and isn't adequate in light of the number of students with disabilities available at AAU. Students also said that most of

assistive technologies provided by AAU libraries were very old braille books and some material on audio format that is mainly intended for students with visual impairments.

4.4 Disability Specific Questions

Students with disabilities were asked specific question related to their disability type to assess the specific barrier they have encountered in their education.

4.4.1 Hearing Impaired students

Table 4.17 Sign language interpreter for hearing impaired students

Does the university provide sign language interpreters?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	56.6
NO	33	43.4

Students with hearing impairments were asked whether the university provides a sign language interpreter during their education about 56.6% said that the university provides sign language interpreters and about 43.4 % said there is no sign language interpreter provided by AAU during their education.

Table 4.18 Course modification for hearing impaired students

Does the university modify courses that require hearing?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	64.4
NO	26	35.6

About 64.4 % of students with hearing impairments said that there is no course or lecture modification even if the course requires hearing such as presenting paper. About 35.6% of student on the other hand said there is modification of course and lecture related to their disability needs.

Table 4.19 Major barriers to education students with hearing impairments encountered

Main barrier to education for students with hearing impairments	Frequency	Percent
Difficulty accessing written material	24	31.6
Difficulty communicating with students	34	44.7
Difficulty communicating with teachers and staff	33	43.7
Difficulty taking notes during lecture time	30	39.5
Difficulty getting sign language interpreter	53	69.7

As indicated in table 4.17, Students with hearing impairments perceive some barrier as the most difficult. About 69.7% of respondents said that getting sign language interpreter was the difficult problem that creates the major barrier in their education. On the other hand 44.7% of students also face difficulty in communicating with other students. From amongst the respondents 43.7% of students said that they have difficulty communicating with teachers and staff and 39.5 % of respondents said they have encountered barrier because of the difficulty of taking note during

lecture time. In contrast students who said they have difficulty accessing written material were around 31.6% only.

4.4.2 Physical impairments

Students with physical impairments were also asked whether the university did modify any course or lecture or assignments that need modification based on their disability need such as field work, almost all of students said there were no modification in any programme, course or lecture which requires extensive movement from one place to other such as field work.

Table 4.20 Major barrier to education for students with physical impairments

Main barrier to education for students with physical impairments	Frequency	Percent
Movement from one place to other	24	54.5
Lack of ramp	34	77.3
Lack preferential setting	16	36.4
In accessible classroom	36	81.8
Fieldwork	24	54.5

Table 4.18 shows the major barrier to education for students with physical impairments. The majority of students about 81.8% reported experiencing barrier related to inaccessible classroom environments and about 77.3% of students reported barrier related to lack of ramp. Half of students or 54.5 % said they have encountered barrier on field work and when moving from one place to another. Most of barrier related to movements from one place to another is caused by in accessibility of physical environments and building such as classroom and lack of elevators in most of AAU's buildings.

Students with physical impairments were also asked if they have faced any difficulty in using university building such as classroom, library and other buildings inside university. The majority students about 81.8% reported having difficulty using most of Addis Ababa university building. They reported that almost all of buildings have no elevator and the internal part of building especially library is not accessible for students who use wheelchair.

4.4.3 Visually Impairments

Table 4.21 Barriers faced due to lack of assistive technology

Does the lack of assistive technology create barrier in your education?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	153	92.7
NO	12	7.3

Students with visual impairments have faced major barrier due to lack of assistive technology such as computer, braille paper, audio cassette, tape recorder, scanner and other assistive technology. Question was posed for students with visual impairments to assess how much the lack of assistive technology create barrier in their education the majority of respondents 92.7% said lack of assistive technology have created a major barrier in their education. On the other hand about 93.3 % of students with visual impairments said that they have received a braille paper from disability center but, the braille paper they receive is small in number and not adequate.

4.5 Additional Barrier faced by students with disabilities at AAU

Participants of the study were also asked to suggest additional academic barrier faced by students with disabilities at Addis Ababa University that weren't included in the questionnaires. They have come up with the following barriers: lack of educational material, lack of sign language interpreter, inadequate sign language skill by some instructor, negative attitude from the university community, low level of awareness from university community toward students with disabilities, lack of assistive technology, inadequate knowledge of teachers in teaching deaf students, inadequate services and material at disability center, inaccessible physical environment, negative attitude from some faculty members, uncomfortable library chair and table , inaccessible rooms and stairs inside library building, lack of adequate space in library, lack of reader for blind students, lack of braille book especially new braille book, inadequate braille paper, prejudice from other students at classroom during group work.

4.6 Discussion

This section presents the interpretation of the main finding of the research. This study tries to describe the barriers SwD faces at Addis Ababa university main campus.

Students with disabilities face a number of barriers in higher education (Paul, 2000 cited in Fuller et al, 2004; Tinklin & Hall, 1999) this is also true in the context of AAU, the finding of the present study also support the above assumption. The finding of research revealed that around 33.9% of respondent said they have faced academic barrier at AAU whereas around 51.4% said they have sometimes faced barrier during their education.

The finding is also consistent with most of the research done on the experience of students with disabilities in higher education institution. A study by Adams and Holland (2006), Baron et al. (1996) and Tinklin and Hall (1999) identified multiple barriers SwD faced at higher educational institution. Some of these include physical inaccessibility, problem in accessing curricula, negative attitude, and lack of disability wide policy, inability to get information, low awareness toward SwD, and problem in examination and assignment. The presents study also confirms that most of the participants of the study have experienced some of these barriers. Among the respondents about 46.6% said they have experienced barrier related to physical inaccessibility and 78.9% said they have experienced barrier related to negative attitudes, whereas 60.9 % of respondents said they have encountered barrier on course structure. The majority of respondents about 77.9% of reported having difficulty during assignment, 64% during examination and about 71% of respondents said they have encountered barrier on getting different learning resource and 53.3% on getting information respectively.

According to Baron et al. (1996) discriminatory attitudes and being not aware of the requirements of individual students with disabilities can create barrier to education for students with disability. Throughout this study finding have emerged which suggest that students with disabilities have faced barrier because of negative attitude and unsupportive faculty member. This is also supported by various studies undertaken in higher education institutions. Some of the most obvious issues that support the finding include ; the limited work undertaken on raising academic staffs skill and awareness towards SwD, the negative attitudes of some academics and their unwillingness to support students with disabilities (CHE, 2005; Fuller et al.,2004). The present study also confirm this finding, it was found that 55.4% of students with disabilities have encountered negative attitude from faculty members. Whereas 61.6% said that lecturers were

reluctant to give them support they needed like course material, adjustments of assignments and field work based on their disability need. About 50.9% students with disabilities said the faculty members were uncooperative to them.

Lack of learning resources of various kinds can create major barriers for most of students with disabilities in higher education institution (Borland & James, 1999; Fuller et al., 2004). In this regard, the study result demonstrated that about 71 % of students with disabilities said that they have experienced barrier to education because of lack of learning resources.

Using library and lack of Assistive technology can create a barrier for most of SwD. According to a study by Fuller et al. (2004) 17% of students with disability reported barrier in using library and available information technology facilities. Reasons given were predominately because of the physical inaccessibility and the nature of equipment's. The present study also confirms this, respondent were asked whether they have faced barrier in using library because of their disability about half of the respondent or 49.3% said that they have faced barrier in using library. It was also found that most of the library in AAU lack adequate assistive technology. About 51.3% of respondents said that most of the library in AAU doesn't have adequate assistive technology. With regard to assistive technology 57.1% physically impaired, 39.5 % hearing impaired and 12.4% visually impaired student replied that they haven't received any kinds of assistive technology from AAU.

However, based on the findings of this study there are several factors which higher education institutions and staff supporting SwD should consider if they are to address potential inequalities in educational. Indeed, this study has identified several key issues that need to be solved, these include negative attitudinal from university community, barrier related to learning and teaching,

barrier related lack of educational material and assistive technology, financial constraints facing SwD, physical inaccessibility, low level of awareness toward SwD, barrier related to unsupportive faculty member, are among the few issues that need to be solved.

Although the focus the research has been on the barriers that SwD faces, many examples of good practices were also identified by the study. These include: providing a monthly pocket money for SwD, availability of computer lab at disability centre and in library, provision of braille paper for visual impairments students.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This chapter tries to summarize the main finding of the research. The research has generated numerous finding; however only some of the major findings are discussed here. It is possible to point out that barrier to education for students with disabilities is widespread but there are also promising efforts on the part of Addis Ababa University to provide barrier free services for students with disabilities.

It is possible, however to point out some of the key issues and highlight challenge facing students with disabilities.

- The research finding shows that, most of SwD at AAU were male. The numbers of female students with disabilities are very few compared to their male counterparts.
- There are academic supports given for students with disabilities ranging from financial support by disability center to access to computer at disability center and Kennedy library, classroom relocation, assistive technology. Students with visual impairments can also get payment for reader and braille paper from disability center.
- Students with disabilities also get assistive technologies. Such as white canes, hearing aid, wheelchair, DVD, Tape recorder etc. There is also a computer lab at disability center and at Kennedy library with JAWS software installed. But the computer lab has limited computer and lack adequate space to cater for large number students with disabilities.

The survey finding revealed that around 61.9% of respondents said assistive technology provided by AAU for students with disabilities is not adequate.

- Among the major barrier students with disabilities encountered at AAU includes: negative attitudes and stigma, financial barriers, lack of educational material, low awareness of university community on disability issues, Physical inaccessibility of campus and university building, lack of assistive technologies, inadequate service at disability center, Low level of awareness from university community toward students with disabilities.
- Additionally Students with visual impairment face barrier because of lack of reader, lack of up-to-date braille book in the library, inadequate braille paper, inadequate space and material inside library, uncooperative instructor to give them course material such as lecture note, PowerPoint slide.
- Likewise students with hearing impairments face barrier because of lack of sign language interpreter, uncooperative instructor to give them course material such as lecture note, PowerPoint slide, and inadequate sign language skill by some instructor, inability to take lecture note, lack of access to learning and teaching material, difficulty communicating with teachers, staff and students.
- With regard to barriers during the teaching-learning process SwD reported that they face several challenges including, assignments 77.9%, using learning resource 71 %, examination 64%, and getting information 53.3% respectively.

- Students with disabilities also face barrier from faculty members these includes negative attitude 55.4%, uncooperative faculty members 49.1% and reluctances from faculty members to give support for students with disabilities 61.6%.
- The result of the survey also reveals that students with disabilities have faced major barriers inside libraries. Some of these barriers include the physical in accessibility of the library building, reading room, table and chair of the library. Lack of accessible educational material such as book in braille and audio format. Lack of assistive technology like computer, hearing aid, cassette, tape recorder.

Based on the finding of the study it is possible to conclude that students with disabilities still face substantial amounts of barrier in higher education institutions. This is to mean that the service provided by AAU for students with disabilities is very limited to areas like providing limited financial support, some assistive technology and limited educational support. It is therefore possible to conclude that unless the university makes strong effort to tackle the problem of students with disabilities face in their education, students with disabilities will continues to face barrier in their education.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the finding of the research I would like recommend the following points.

- Throughout this study findings have emerged which suggests that, the nature of the teaching and learning process and the barrier it had created for students with disabilities is given insufficient attention, and despite some valuable interventions it remains the most difficult area to address. It is therefore, important to address and give sufficient

attention on the nature of teaching and learning process that create barrier on students with disabilities.

- The evidence collected in this research shows that students with disabilities get limited financial resource that would help them to succeed in their education. Providing adequate financial support for students with disabilities will reduce the barrier they will face during their education.
- Formulating policy and strategies that address the needs of students with disabilities. Policies and strategies provide the framework within which institutions operate and thus it is important to develop policy that will help to guide the support given to students with disabilities in higher education institutions.
- The research finding revealed that the university communities have low awareness about disability issues. It is therefore, important to raise awareness of faculty staff, students as well as entire university community on the issue of disability. In this regard the disability center should play an important advocacy role to raise the awareness of the university community.
- Ensuring that students with disabilities get equal benefits from the educational services provided by the university on equal base with other. Service should be provided on the principle of human right and universal access.
- Designing and preparing accessible course and instruction material which would not create barrier for students with disabilities.
- Higher educational institution should incorporate concepts of universal design into faculty instruction and curricula that ultimately benefit all students in their learning

process. It is an educational approach for instructing all students through developing flexible classroom materials, using various technology tools.

- Compulsory skills based training must be offered for lecturers to ensure that, they accommodate the needs of SwD in the teaching and learning processes.
- Building including classroom, library, computer lab and stairs must be physically accessible for students with disabilities.
- Disability inclusion should be taken into account at all levels and all departments and faculties. The disability agenda is to be entrenched in the way in which the institutions function as a whole.
- It is suggested that data should be collected on regular intervals, on the number of students with disabilities enrolled at HEIs in Ethiopia as well as the progress they made which will serve to monitor the progress made toward including SwD in higher education.
- Likewise further research should be done on the problem SwD faces at higher education institution in Ethiopia and the major barrier they faced during their education. This will give a holistic picture of the situation of SwD in HEIs in Ethiopia and also serve as literature for future policy development and education.
- Providing adequate support person based on their disability need. For example students with visual impairments need reader during examination and students with hearing impairments need sign language interpreter this should be provided by the university.
- Providing tutorial service for students with disability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaires

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

Informed consent

Dear Student

I am a graduate student at Addis Ababa University School of Social Work. I am currently doing my thesis on the topic “*Exploring academic barriers to students with disabilities at Addis Ababa University Main campus*”. The information I will collect will help me to write my research paper. The main objective of this questionnaire is to collect data on the main barrier students with disabilities encountered while studying at AAU. Your response is very important for the success of the research, therefore you are kindly requested to give me your response. All of the answer you gave will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone. The anonymity of respondents will be respected throughout the data processing and analysis process.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Interviewer name..... Signature.....

1. General Information

Q.No	Questions	Response
1.1	Age	
1.2	Gender	Male.....1 Female.....2
1.3	Department	
1.4	Which of the following categories best describe your disabilities?	Deaf/hard of hearing.....1 Blind or Visually impaired.....2 Physical/mobility impaired.....3 Other specify.....

2. General Question on Disability

2.1	Do you get any academic support from the AAU?	Yes.....1 No.....2
2.2	Do you get any assistive technology such as computer, braille software, hearing aid, tape recorder etc. from AAU?	Yes.....1 Yes sometimes.....2 Not at all.....3
2.3	From the following facility on which facility do you frequently encounter barrier? (Circle all that apply)	Classroom.....1 Ramps.....2 Elevators3 Stairs.....4 Doors.....5 Corridor.....6 Library.....7 Other Specify.....
2.4	How adequate is the accommodations that are provided to individual students with disabilities?	Adequate.....1 Somehow adequate2 Not adequate.....3
2.5	What is the major barrier you have encountered at this university?	Physical inaccessibility..... 1 Financial limitation.....2 Negative Attitudes3 Lack of Educational material.....4
2.6	Does the inaccessibility of campus and academic facility create barrier in your education?	Yes.....1 No.....2

3. Barrier on Teaching and Learning

3.1	Do you face academic barrier at this university because of your disability?	Yes always.....1 Yes sometimes2 Not at all.....3
3.2	What is the main barrier you have encountered from faculty members?	Uncooperative faculty members.....1 Negative attitude.....2 Reluctant to give support, course/lecture notes.....3 Other Specify.....4
3.3	In which area do you frequently encountered academic barrier? (Circle all that apply)	Course.....1 Instructor.....2 Lecture.....3 Examination.....4

		Getting information.....5
3.4	In general, how supportive did you find your faculty member to be regarding disability issues?	Extremely supportive.....1 Moderately supportive2 Not supportive at all.....3
3.5	Are teaching and administrative staff adequately equipped and trained to deal with students with disabilities?	Yes.....1 No adequately trained.....2 Not at all.....3
3.6	Have you ever faced barrier related to your disability which has affected your ability to use learning resource?	Yes.....1 No.....2
3.7	Have you faced barrier related to your disability which has affected your experience of taking examination?	Yes.....1 No.....2
3.8	Have you faced barrier related to your disability which has affected your experience doing assignment?	Yes.....1 No.....2

4. Library

4.1	Have you faced barrier in using library because of your disability?	Yes.....1 No.....2
4.2	Does the library make effort to provide service in accessible format for students with disability?	Yes.....1 No.....2
4.3	Does the library provide assistive technology such as computer, braille software, braille printer, hearing aid etc.?	Yes.....1 No.....2

5. Disability Specific Questions

Only for hearing impaired/Deaf students

5.1	Does the university provide a sign language interpreter?	Yes.....1 No.....2
5.2	Does the university modify or change some programme, course, and lecture that require hearing?	Yes.....1 No.....2
5.3	What do you think is the main barrier to your education at this university? <u>(Circle all that apply)</u>	Difficulty accessing written material, lecture note, handout etc.....1 Difficulty communicating with students.....2 Difficulty communicating with teachers and staff.....3

		Difficulty taking notes at the same time of lecture.....4 Difficulty getting sign language interpreter.....5 Other specify.....6
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Only for physically/mobility impaired

5.4	Does the university modify or change some programme, course, and lecture that require mobility such as fieldwork?	Yes.....1 No.....2
5.5	In which areas do you frequently encountered academic barrier? <u>(Circle all that apply)</u>	Movement from one place to other.....1 Lack of ramp.....2 Lack Preferential setting.....3 In accessible classroom.....4 Fieldwork.....5 Other specify.....6
5.6	Have you faced difficulty in using university building such as classroom, library, door etc.?	Yes.....1 No.....2

Only for Visually Impaired/Blind

5.7	Does the university provide material, exam paper, lecture note etc. in a form accessible to a blind student?	Yes.....1 No.....2
5.8	Does the lack of assistive device create barrier in your education?	<u>Yes.....1</u> <u>No.....2</u>
5.9	Do you get any assistive device such as braille from the university?	Yes.....1 No.....2

6. Additional questions

6.1. In your opinion what are the major academic barriers students with disability faces at higher education?

I, the undersigned, declare that the thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: **Dawit Tessentu**

Signature:

Date: **06/26/2014**