



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED EMPLOYEES IN
ADDIS ABABA.**

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED EMPLOYEES IN ADDIS
ABABA THE CASE OF ARADA, KOLFE KERANIO AND GULELE SUB CITIES**

BY: WONDOSSEN TESFAYE (ID: GSE/8485/14)

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, pronounce that this Thesis is my original work, and every one of the wellsprings of materials utilized for the thesis has been properly recognized.

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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend to Addis Ababa University to accept the thesis submitted by Wondosen Tesfaye, entitled “exploring the challenges of visually impaired employees in Addis Ababa the case of Arada, Kolfe and Gulele sub cities, and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters in Social Work complies with the regulation of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Approved By the Examining Board

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Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

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Abstract

This study explored the challenges faced by visually impaired employees in the Arada, Kolfe Keranio, and Gulele sub-cities of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The research aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges of visual impaired employees in their respective work place. The research utilized a qualitative approach, by using in-depth interviews with 15 purposely selected visually impaired employees, as well as 10 key informant interviewees who represented government offices, human resource departments, and disability organizations, as well as 24 FGDs participants. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The result of the study showed that visual impaired employees face unfair treatment in the workplace, employers often failed to provide necessary materials on time, lack of assistants and appropriate transportation and access to different facilities within the organizations. There are also some negative attitudes from other employees that affected their social participation. The participants also reported low salaries compared to non-visual employees. The research findings suggest that employers should adhere to the responsibilities outlined in Article 6 of Proclamation 568/2008, including promoting employment opportunities and removing barriers for persons with disabilities and others as stated by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology: attention must be given to assistive devices to support the visually impaired individuals to be more efficient and active in their job performance.

Keywords: *Visual impairment, employment, workplace challenges, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

Acronym

AAU - Addis Ababa University

BOLSA: Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs

CSA: Central Statics Agency

DPOs: Disable person organization

FDRE - Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

GSE - Graduate Studies Enrollment

HR: Human Resource

ICT - Information and Communications Technology

ILO: International Labor Organization

MOLSA - The Former Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

MSW - Masters in Social Work

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

NRCD - National Rehabilitation Center for Disabled

PhD - Doctor of Philosophy

PWDS: person with disabilities

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UNCRPD: United Nation Convention on the Right of Person with Disabilities.

WB: World Bank

WHO: World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background of the Study

People with disabilities (PWDs) make up a significant portion of the global population, yet they often face significant economic, political, and social marginalization. Estimates suggest that PWDs account for around 10% of the world's population, with over 650 million individuals, including 470 million of working age (ILO, 2007). Employment is essential for PWDs and those without disabilities, as it fosters a sense of equality, enhances the ability to make choices, and facilitates participation in activities necessary for success. It can serve as a catalyst for PWDs to reach their full potential and demonstrate their competence and efficiency. Achieving this, however, often requires dedication, perseverance, and a willingness to take calculated risks in the workplace.

Many employers hold negative perceptions of PWDs, viewing them as inferior or submissive in the eyes of their superiors, coworkers, and the employer themselves. PWDs' attendance and performance at work are sometimes used as a measure of their efficiency, and their efforts to assert their rights are often seen as barriers to employment (Mindahun, 2006).

Employers often show less concern and initiative towards their disabled employees compared to their non-disabled counterparts. Some PWDs believe that overcoming obstacles at work and remaining passive in the face of adversity will lead to success, as they are determined not to let their disability be an excuse for their incapacity (Tirusew, 2005).

Individuals with disabilities often face discrimination and limited job access, relying on family support, which can hinder their independence. Employers frequently hold biased views about their capabilities, affecting recruitment outcomes. (Barnes, 2000).

However, modern conceptions of disability have shifted beyond a focus solely on individual impairment. Instead, they acknowledge that the impact of an individual's impairment depends not just on the underlying condition but also on social and environmental circumstances. As a result,

impairment may not always result in disability or handicap. Conversely, a lack of support in a certain setting could lead to an unnecessary handicap from a disability (Albert, 2004).

In general, both developed and developing nations have a high population of people with disabilities. Furthermore, it is well-established in disability statistics that individuals with disabilities have lower employment rates compared to the general population. This is largely due to a lack of education, vocational training, and the prevalence of stereotyped attitudes that severely limit the employability of people with disabilities. (Albert, 2004).

According to the public service and human resource data from the Addis Ababa city administration, 165,085 individuals employed in government offices across the 11 sub-cities of Addis Ababa, 73,250 are men and 91,835 are women. Of these, 1,265 are people with disabilities, with 721 are men and 544 are women. Specifically, 169 people with disabilities are employed in the Kolfe Keranio sub-city, 158 in the Arada sub-city, 144 in the Gulele sub-city, 138 in the Addis Ketema sub-city, 137 in the Yeka sub-city, 126 in the Bole sub-city, 114 in the Lemi kura sub-city, 101 in the Kirkos sub-city, 73 in the Akaki sub-city, 55 in the Nifas Silk sub-city, and 47 in the Lideta sub-city. When considering the type of disability, individuals with visual impaired constitute the largest group among the employed people with disabilities, with a total of 575.

The challenges of people with disabilities, particularly those employed, are understudied in Ethiopia although some researchers have attempted to study the challenges of getting jobs for persons with disabilities especially upon their graduation.

This study was conducted in Addis Ababa city in localities known as Arada, Kolfe Keranio, and Gulele sub-cities due to the availability of relatively higher number of employed people with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments.

This study aims to explore the challenges encountered by visually impaired employees in their workplace environments with the view to provide data to tackle their challenges and improve their

work and living conditions. The data will also be used to help stakeholders develop effective strategies to address these challenges.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Research on disability and employment issues in Ethiopia is limited. The existing studies have primarily focused on disability rights from a legal perspective and the recruitment process. As a result, the post-employment experiences of individuals with disabilities remain understudied. (Tesfaye, 2018). For instance, a local study conducted by (Gezahegne, 2016) examined hiring practices and employer attitudes towards persons with disabilities in Addis Ababa, but it primarily focused on the recruitment stages. The lack of understanding among hiring managers about how job candidates with disabilities can fulfill pre-employment requirements may be a significant barrier to employment.

In a study conducted by (Shito, 2008) was concerned with the rights of persons with disabilities in Ethiopia. It focused on key issues such as economic, social, and cultural rights as outlined in the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The study analyzed the rights of persons with disabilities under Proclamation No. 568/2008, including their right to employment opportunities and the prohibition of discrimination. The findings revealed a lack of comprehensive domestic laws addressing disability rights. Furthermore, the research indicated that employed individuals with disabilities generally have limited or no access to social and economic services. They also face mobility and information discrimination due to the inaccessibility of roads and public transport facilities in Ethiopia.

Additional studies have examined the employment barriers faced by individuals with disabilities, revealing that employers frequently hesitate to hire them due to concerns about their capacity to carry out job responsibilities (Mindahun, 2006; Tirusew, 2005; ILO, 2004; Bruyere, 2000). Furthermore, private organizations have displayed bias against hiring individuals with disabilities,

often based on the perception that they are less capable (Mindahun, 2006; Tirusew, 2005; ILO, 2004; Bruyere, 2000).

In 2013, Addis Ababa University released a manual focusing on disability awareness for employers, disability management in the workplace, job adaptations, and reasonable accommodations (Fate Tilmo Kedir, 2020; Desalegn, 2013; Sisay, 2023). Following this, subsequent studies have explored the specific challenges that individuals with physical disabilities encounter in the workforce, including employment discrimination, underemployment, and infrastructural barriers.

The definitions of disability and impairment have been extensively examined in the literature (Morris, 2021; UN, 2008; WHO, 2011). Additionally, the historical evolution of the disability paradigm has been analyzed by various scholars, how perceptions and frameworks surrounding disability have developed over time (Oliver, 1990; Barnes, 2000; Albert, 2004; Oliver and Spaley, 2006).

A study by (Tesfaye, 2018) investigated the relationship between disability, employment opportunities, and poverty, focusing on individuals with disabilities in Harar town. His study showed high unemployment rates among respondents and that those employed were predominantly in low-paying, insecure positions.

Similarly studies conducted by Yeo (2001) and Rust (2007) stated that marginalization of disabled in terms of labor market in education and so forth plays a significant and important role in the relationship between disability and poverty. Exclusion from access to education, to health care and to employment contributes to the creation of a vicious circle between disability and poverty.

The Global studies also conducted by the World Bank Group (2022) have highlighted legal guarantees for parental rights, inclusion of women with disabilities in labor markets, and protection against gender-based violence.

However, none of the above-mentioned studies have specifically investigated the challenges faced by visually impaired employees in their respective workplaces. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by examining the workplace challenges encountered by visually impaired employees in Addis Ababa.

1.3. General objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to explore the challenges of visually impaired employees in their respective work areas.

1.4. Research Question

1. What are the main challenges faced in the work place by visually employees?
2. What are the perceptions of employers towards visual impaired employees?
3. What are needs of such persons at workplace?
4. What are their perception in finding jobs and maintaining their employment?
5. How do they cope with the various challenges they encounter?

1.4.1. Specific Objectives of the Study

- To explore the socio- economic challenges of visually impaired employees in their work places
- To describe the perceptions of employers towards visual impaired employees.
- To identify the needs of visual impaired employees at workplace.
- To know the process through which visual impaired employees go in finding and maintaining their jobs.
- To explore the coping mechanisms used by visually impaired employees to minimize their challenges.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study will be significant to a number of stakeholders, service providers, visually employees themselves and social sciences researchers including social workers. From this perspective, the results of the study will offer insights and means of interventions such as awareness-raising and experience-sharing programs on the employment of disabled persons. This study will also be a significant source of information for the city's public service and human resource development bureaus, as well as respective sub-city human resources offices, by highlighting employment system priorities that will require due consideration during the planning phase.

1.6. Operational Definitions of Terms

Employed person with disabilities: Is a person who is blind and works in Addis Ababa city in those selected sub cities.

Challenges: it is Barriers for employed visually impaired persons at the work place including accessibility, getting assistive devices, socio –economic and attitudinal biases etc.

1.7. Scope of the Study

This study took place within the Addis Ababa city administration, specifically in three selected sub-cities: Arada, Kolfe Keranio, and Gulele. The research was scheduled to be conducted from January 2023 to July 25, 2024. It focused on the challenges of visually impaired employees at their respective work place, attitudinal challenges, socio-economic, physical environment accessibilities and getting work place equipment's.

1.8. Limitation of the study

The limitation of this study was that it was time constraints especially to collect data's and analyze the data. In addition to that there were some difficulties to get information's on some issues and there is a great challenge to get informants who have a little bite high responsibilities.

1.9. Organization of the Thesis

This research has six chapters. The first chapter introduces the study; Major literatures that are related with the research topic are reviewed in chapter two. The third chapter discusses research design, sample selection, data sources, tools, and presentation methods. Findings of the research broadly presented under chapter four and chapter five discussions and implication to social work practice and policy makers. The final chapter is about the conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. The Concepts of Disability

Disability studies have evolved over time. It is now widely recognized that disability is a problem in the interaction between an individual and the social environmental by creating attitudinal barriers that prevent the individual's full and equal participation in society (UNCRPD, 2006). Disability can be described as a functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability to perform certain activities or functions (World Health Organization, 2011; Morris, 2021).

Disability is not merely an individual attribute as it arises from the unfavorable interaction between an individual person's condition and the contextual factors of their personal and environmental circumstances (World Health Organization, 2011; Morris, 2021). It can be seen as a limitation on an individual's ability to function and engage effectively in society, influenced by various social, environmental, economic, technological, and attitudinal factors. Accordingly, disability is understood as a social construct that necessitates collective societal efforts to address the challenges it presents (Oliver, 1990; Barnes, 2000).

Historically, disability has often been associated with stigma and negative attitudes in different societies. Such misperceptions of disability have led societies to see it as a tragedy, a source of shame, or the result of sin and divine punishment. Consequently, individuals with disabilities have frequently been perceived as a burden to their families and to society (Barnes, 2000; Albert, 2004).

2.2. Models of Disability

Over time, various models have been used to conceptualize disability, including the Charity Model, Medical Model, Social Model, Human Rights Model, and Capacity Model. The historical evolution of these models marks a shift from religious and medical perspectives to more social and rights-based approaches. The medical model, which prevailed for many years, regarded disability as an

individual impairment to be "cured" or managed, with the medical profession at the forefront of this view (Oliver, 1990).

In the 20th century, there was a marked change towards a "social model" of disability, which focuses on the relationship between people with disabilities and their social environment, highlighting the need for interventions within the realm of social policy and institutional practice (Barnes, 2000; Oliver and Spayey, 2006).

2.2.1. Charity Model of Disability

The charity model is one of the oldest frameworks for understanding disability, suggesting that individuals with disabilities are incapable of meaningful societal contributions and must rely on the state or their families for support. This approach often leads to institutionalization or home confinement, with family members providing care. It reinforces negative attitudes and stigma, portraying people with disabilities as social outcasts who evoke pity and are considered deserving of charity (Tesfaye, 2018).

The charity model views individuals with disabilities as tragic figures and victims of their impairments, positioning them as passive recipients of aid and services offered by benevolent caregivers. In this framework, disabled individuals are often perceived as having limited autonomy and decision-making power regarding the support they receive. Services are typically designed and delivered to them, often with good intentions but lacking adequate consultation with the individuals affected. This can result in a reliance on caregivers, who may derive a sense of gratification and reward from the caregiving relationship (Shakespeare, 2006).

Furthermore, disabled people may be stereotyped in various ways - as tragic and passive if they require high levels of support, as bitter and aggressive if they challenge the status quo, or as brave and inspirational if they manage to overcome barriers. This model has also justified the provision of

"special" segregated services for disabled people, rather than ensuring their full inclusion and participation in mainstream society (Tesfaye, 2018).

2.2.1.1. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Charity Model in the Ethiopian Context

Strengths:

One of the key strength of the charity model in Ethiopia is that it can provide immediate and vital assistance to people with disabilities, particularly in contexts where government services and support may be limited. Charitable organizations and religious institutions play an important role in filling this gap and delivering essential services and resources to persons with disabilities.

Additionally, charities can help raise awareness about disability issues and challenge negative societal attitudes in Ethiopia. By drawing attention to the needs and experiences of persons with disabilities, they can work to counter the stigma and misconceptions that often surround disability.

Weaknesses:

The charity model has significant limitations and drawbacks. At its core, it perpetuates the notion of disability as a tragedy or misfortune, failing to recognize it as a natural aspect of the human experience. This perspective reinforces the stigma and marginalization faced by individuals with disabilities in Ethiopian society.

Additionally, an over-reliance on charity can create a sense of dependency among people with disabilities, ultimately limiting their opportunities for empowerment, self-determination, and full participation in mainstream community life. The paternalistic nature of this approach undermines their agency and control over the decisions that affect their lives.

Although the charity model has dominated the understanding of disability in Ethiopia for many years, its shortcomings highlight the urgent need for a shift toward more empowering, rights-based, and socially inclusive models. Such frameworks can better promote the full inclusion and

participation of persons with disabilities in Ethiopian society, emphasizing their rights and capabilities rather than viewing them solely as objects of pity.

2.2.2. The Medical Model of Disability: Conceptual Foundations and Limitations

The medical model is a prevalent framework that views the challenges and disadvantages experienced by people with disabilities as primarily stemming from their underlying medical condition or impairment. This model holds that the "problems" associated with disability are located within the individual, and that the primary focus should be on identifying, diagnosing, and "curing" or "rehabilitating" the person's medical condition (Albert, 2004).

2.2.2.1. Conceptual Foundations of the Medical Model

The medical model of disability, as outlined by (Albert, 2004) views disability as a personal tragedy that necessitates medical intervention to "fix" or "overcome." It perceives disability as an inherent problem within the individual, prioritizing clinical diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation with the goal of restoring "normal" functioning in society. While this approach has led to advancements in medical care and rehabilitation, it often neglects the social and environmental barriers that contribute to the marginalization of individuals with disabilities. By placing the responsibility for normalization solely on the individual, the medical model perpetuates a limited understanding of disability and inhibits broader efforts toward inclusion and acceptance in society.

2.2.2.2. Limitations and Critiques of the Medical Model

The medical model of disability has significant limitations as it locates the "problem" of disability within the individual while neglecting the environmental, social, and attitudinal barriers that contribute to disability. This model fosters a perception of individuals with disabilities as passive "patients" needing to be "fixed," which can lead to their institutionalization and undermine their autonomy. Furthermore, by framing disability as a personal tragedy or deficiency, the medical model

contributes to stigmatization and marginalization, reinforcing negative societal attitudes about the value of individuals with disabilities. (Albert, 2004)

2.2.2.3. Implications for the Ethiopian Context

In Ethiopia, the medical model of disability has long been the dominant framework for delivering support and services, primarily through charitable organizations and religious institutions. However, as noted by (Albert, 2004) this model's limitations such as perpetuating stigma and fostering dependency pose significant challenges to providing comprehensive and empowering support for persons with disabilities. The text advocates for a shift towards rights-based and socially inclusive approaches that recognize disability as a natural aspect of human diversity and focus on addressing societal, environmental, and attitudinal barriers, rather than merely aiming to "fix" individual impairments.

2.2.2.4. The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Medical Model of Disability

Strengths of the Medical Model:

- **Conceptual Framework:** The model provides a clear conceptual framework for understanding the biological and clinical aspects of disability. It offers a structured approach to identifying, diagnosing, and addressing the medical conditions or impairments experienced by persons with incapacities.
- **Ensuring Appropriate Medical Care:** By framing disability as a medical issue, the model can help ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the necessary medical attention, treatment, and rehabilitation services to address their specific needs. This can be particularly important in contexts where access to healthcare is limited.
- **Prioritizing Service Development:** The medical model can contribute to the prioritization of developing specialized medical and rehabilitation services for persons with incapacities. This

can lead to the allocation of resources and the establishment of systems to cater to the healthcare requirements of this population.

Weaknesses of the Medical Model:

- **Individualistic Approach:** The medical model places the "problem" of incapacity within the individual, rather than recognizing the role of societal, environmental, and attitudinal barriers in disabling people. This individualistic perspective can lead to a narrow focus on "fixing" or "curing" the individual's impairment, rather than addressing the broader societal factors that contribute to disability.

2.2.3. The Social Model of Disability: Shifting the Paradigm

The social model of disability, developed by scholars and activists, represents a significant shift away from the individual-centric medical and charity models. According to (Oliver and Sapey, 2006) the social model redefines incapacity as a complex interplay of factors largely influenced by the social environment, rather than being an inherent trait of the individual. This perspective highlights the importance of addressing the societal structures and conditions that contribute to incapacity.

2.2.3.1. Key Principles of the Social Model:

The social model of disability redefines the understanding of disability by focusing on societal structures and attitudes as the primary barriers preventing full participation of individuals with disabilities, rather than individual impairments. This model highlights three key barriers: physical, institutional, and attitudinal, and advocates for societal change rather than individual "fix" (Oliver, 1990).

By empowering individuals with disabilities to share their experiences and participate in advocacy, the social model has influenced global disability rights movements, resulting in inclusive design principles, supportive legislation, and strengthened organizations that champion the rights of

disabled persons (Barton, 1996; Shakespeare, 2013). Embracing this model fosters an inclusive society that values diversity and equity, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all individuals (Oliver & Sapey, 2006).

2.2.3.2. Strengths and Limitations of the Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability shifts the focus from the individual's impairment to the societal barriers that disable people. This approach emphasizes the fundamental human right of persons with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of society (Oliver, 1990; Finkelstein, 1980).

By identifying the physical, institutional, and attitudinal obstacles that restrict the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the social model inspires and empowers the development of accessible design and accommodations (Oliver & Sapey, 2006). This can significantly reduce the disabling impact of the environment, allowing for greater autonomy and integration of individuals with various impairments.

While the social model has been instrumental in advancing disability rights, some scholars argue that it can downplay the embodied, physical experiences of disability (Shakespeare, 2013). There is a concern that by solely attributing disability to societal factors, the model may strip the disability from a person's core identity and lived experiences. Some incapacity theorists suggest that a balanced approach, which recognizes both the social and the individual/bodily aspects of disability, may be more comprehensive in understanding and addressing the complex realities faced by persons with disabilities (Crow, 1996; Thomas, 1999).

2.2.4. The Human Rights Approach of Disability

The human rights model of disability emerged in the mid-2000s, particularly during the drafting of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Quinn & Degener, 2002). This model, alongside the social model, constitutes the foundational concepts of the CRPD, asserting that all individuals with disabilities are entitled to the same fundamental rights and

freedoms as any other person, in line with international human rights treaties like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Kayess & French, 2008).

The CRPD reaffirms existing human rights, rather than creating new ones, emphasizing the obligation of ratifying countries to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully enjoy the same rights as non-disabled individuals (Degener, 2016). This involves addressing specific barriers through reasonable accommodations, accessibility measures, and inclusive policies (Kayess & French, 2008). Central to the human rights model is the empowerment of individuals with disabilities, advocating for their active participation in decision-making and control over the resources and support that foster their independence (Degener, 2016). This approach highlights the universality of human rights while recognizing the distinct challenges faced by persons with disabilities in exercising those rights (Stein & Stein, 2007).

2.2.4.1. Strengths and Limitations of the Human Rights Model of Disability

The human rights model of disability asserts that all individuals with disabilities are entitled to universal human rights, emphasizing their dignity, equality, and right to participate in society (Degener, 2016; Kayess & French, 2008). A significant strength of this model is its robust legal framework, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which empowers individuals by recognizing their self-determination and obligates governments to remove barriers to inclusion (Stein & Stein, 2007).

However, the implementation of this model faces challenges, particularly in resource-limited settings, as fulfilling the rights outlined in the CRPD requires substantial investments in accessibility and support services (Kayess & French, 2008). Additionally, there can be resistance from those vested in the status quo and from policymakers who may not fully understand the model, complicating efforts to create an inclusive environment for persons with disabilities (Degener, 2016).

2.2.5. The Capacity Model of Disability

The capacity model of disability emphasizes individuals' inherent strengths, abilities, and potential rather than their impairments or limitations (Wehmeyer, 2019). It acknowledges that disability results from the intricate interaction between a person's functional capacities and the environmental factors they face (Shogren et al., 2015).

2.2.5.1. Key Principles of the Capacity Model:

Individuals with disabilities possess the same fundamental rights and potentials as anyone else (Shogren et al., 2015). Disability is viewed as a dynamic process, influenced by personal and environmental factors (Wehmeyer, 2019). It is essential for people with disabilities to be involved in decision-making regarding their own lives, as they are the experts in their experiences (Shogren et al., 2015). Additionally, supports and services should be customized to meet the unique needs and aspirations of each individual with a disability (Wehmeyer, 2019).

2.2.5.2. Comparison to the ICF:

The capacity model distinguishes itself from the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in several key aspects (Shogren et al., 2015):

Focus on Strengths: The capacity model explicitly emphasizes the strengths and abilities of individuals with disabilities, while the ICF provides a broader, more neutral framework for understanding functioning and disability.

Dynamic vs. Statics: The capacity model conceptualizes disability as a dynamic process that can evolve over time. In contrast, the ICF tends to present a more static snapshot of an individual's functioning at a specific moment.

Individual Perspectives: The capacity model highlights the significance of individual experiences and perspectives, recognizing that people with disabilities are the experts in their own lives.

Although the ICF acknowledges subjective experiences, it generally prioritizes more objective measures of functioning. These differences underscore the capacity model's focus on empowerment and recognition of individual potential, compared to the ICF's broader classification approach.

2.2.5.3. Applications of the Capacity Model:

The capacity model can be effectively applied in various settings, including policy development, service provision, and research. In terms of policy development, it ensures that policies and programs are designed to support the strengths and abilities of individuals with disabilities (Wehmeyer, 2019).

When it comes to service provision, the model guides the creation of tailored supports and services that address the unique needs of each individual with a disability (Shogren et al., 2015). Additionally, in research, the capacity model aids in identifying the factors that promote or hinder the ability of individuals with disabilities to live full and independent lives (Wehmeyer, 2019). Overall, the capacity model serves as a valuable framework for understanding and supporting individuals with disabilities by focusing on their inherent strengths and empowering them to lead fulfilling lives.

2.3. The Employment Challenges of PWDs in Ethiopia

The employment situation for persons with disabilities in Ethiopia is fraught with significant barriers rooted in social, economic, and structural challenges (Tirusew, 2005). Despite government initiatives aimed at promoting inclusion, individuals with disabilities still encounter major obstacles in accessing the labor market.

Employment is vital for independence and self-esteem, yet societal attitudes and biases contribute to misconceptions about their abilities, while discriminatory hiring practices often exclude them from job opportunities (Mindahun, 2006). Furthermore, accessibility issues, particularly in government organizations where infrastructure is inadequate (Sisay, 2023), create additional hurdles. Tackling

these challenges demands a comprehensive approach that focuses on policy development, improved service provision, and changing societal perceptions to ensure equitable participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce (ILO, 2004).

2.4. Employers' Practices of Hiring PWDs

Existing research on the employment of persons with disabilities has primarily concentrated on supply-side factors, such as the skills and preparedness of these individuals, as the main barriers to employment (Bruyere, 2000). However, recent studies highlight the critical role that employer practices and policies play in the employment disparities faced by individuals with disabilities. (Gezahegne Beyene, 2016) emphasizes that employer practices in recruitment, training, compensation, performance management, and employee relations significantly influence the success of organizations.

Recruitment is particularly challenging for individuals with disabilities, as they may struggle to showcase their capabilities due to a lack of clear job history, which can hinder their chances during selection processes. Nonetheless, organizations that adopt approaches considering and accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities not only enhance their overall functioning but also improve their ability to hire these individuals (Gezahegne Beyene, 2016). Ultimately, the success of recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities hinges on the interest and commitment of employers; by addressing biases and misconceptions and promoting inclusive hiring practices, organizations can foster equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities within the labor market.

2.5. Disability, Employment, and Social Exclusion

The relationship between disability and poverty has been thoroughly investigated, revealing that marginalization and exclusion significantly contribute to this cycle. Persons with disabilities often

face barriers to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, creating a vicious cycle of poverty, particularly in developing countries with inadequate social protection systems (Yeo, 2001; Rust, 2007). The World Report on Disability from the World Bank and WHO emphasizes that equal opportunity and access to education and employment are crucial in breaking this cycle.

Age plays a significant role, as individuals who become disabled at birth or during their working years encounter different challenges in accessing educational and labor markets (WHO & World Bank, 2011). Social exclusion is a key concept in understanding this relationship, as it encompasses limited access to essential opportunities and social participation, especially in education and employment, which directly impacts the poverty levels experienced by individuals with disabilities and their families (Yeo, 2001; Rust, 2007).

This exclusion is also linked to social justice concerns, highlighting how minority groups, including persons with disabilities, face discrimination and unequal access to basic services, undermining their well-being and quality of life (Yeo, 2001; Rust, 2007).

2.6. Disability, Employment, and Poverty in Ethiopia

The challenges faced by people with disabilities in Ethiopia mirror those encountered by individuals in other developing countries. Disability is a significant social issue in Ethiopia, as highlighted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA, 1996). Based on the World Health Organization's estimate that around 10% of any population is affected by disability, and considering Ethiopia's population was approximately 74 million in 2007, it is estimated that over 7.3 million people had disabilities at that time. With the current population exceeding 100 million, it is likely that the number of individuals with disabilities in Ethiopia has surpassed 10 million (WHO, 2011).

Despite the absence of recent data specifically detailing the conditions for people with disabilities, it is widely recognized that their situation is likely worse than the average experienced in other developing nations. A significant barrier for individuals with disabilities in Ethiopia is access to

employment. The 1994 census indicated that 85% of the population resides in rural areas, where limited environmental factors hinder the participation of people with disabilities in the labor force. Those who migrate to urban centers often find themselves resorting to begging or depending on the goodwill of charitable organizations for survival (CSA, 1994).

Empirical research reveals that individuals with disabilities in Ethiopia face numerous social challenges, including physical inaccessibility, lack of equal access to employment and education, and pervasive societal stereotypes (SIDA, 2014). Furthermore, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs reported that 95% of persons with disabilities in the country live in poverty, primarily in rural areas where basic services and rehabilitation support are rare. It is crucial to emphasize that this dire situation does not stem from any inherent "laziness" or lack of skills among individuals with disabilities, but instead reflects the profound social marginalization they experience (SIDA, 2014).

2.7. Accessibility of Vacancy Announcements

Managers play a pivotal role in creating an accessible and inclusive recruitment and selection process for individuals with disabilities. Implementing the following practices can help ensure that all candidates are provided with equal opportunities:

1. **Non-Discriminatory Advertising:** It is essential for managers to ensure that all job advertisements and application materials are crafted in a non-discriminatory manner. This can be accomplished by including a statement that emphasizes the organization's commitment to diversity and encourages applications from candidates with disabilities. By doing so, organizations signal their openness to diverse talent.
2. **Equal Opportunity for Interviews:** Managers should guarantee that job applicants with disabilities who meet the essential selection criteria are given an equal chance to be interviewed alongside other candidates. This commitment to fairness is crucial in fostering an inclusive hiring environment.

3. Accommodating Adjustments: Employers must be prepared to make necessary adjustments to the recruitment process to enable candidates with disabilities to participate fully. This might include providing tools or resources, such as sign language interpreters or accessible interview formats, ensuring that candidates can perform on an equal footing with their peers.

4. Familiarity with Evacuation Methods: The human resources department should be knowledgeable about various evacuation methods for employees with disabilities. This includes understanding the specific needs of wheelchair users or individuals with mobility impairments, ensuring that all employees are safe and supported in emergency situations (Gezahegne, 2016).

2.8. Reasonable Accommodation:

Designated employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities as part of their non-discrimination and affirmative action obligations, enabling these individuals to perform essential job functions (Manual for Employability of Persons with Disabilities in Ethiopia, AAU, 2013). Reasonable accommodations involve three key aspects: adjusting the job application process to ensure qualified applicants with disabilities have equal opportunities, modifying the work environment or job performance circumstances to allow individuals with disabilities to fulfill their job requirements, and ensuring that employees with disabilities receive equal benefits and privileges in the workplace.

Accommodations can range from simple to complex and can vary in cost, tailored to the specific needs of the worker (Desalegn, 2013). Examples of reasonable accommodations include enhancing physical accessibility by installing ramps, adapting or acquiring specialized equipment for employees with sensory impairments, reorganizing workstations and schedules for greater efficiency, and making training materials more accessible. By implementing these measures, employers can create an inclusive workplace that provides equal employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities.

2.9. National Instruments for Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

2.9.1. FDRE Constitution

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia serves as the supreme law of the country, establishing fundamental rights and duties for citizens, including specific protections for persons with disabilities (PWDs). It affirms the equality of all individuals before the law, prohibiting discrimination based on various factors, including disability (FDRE Constitution, 1995). Additionally, the Constitution mandates the state to provide rehabilitation and support services for PWDs. Article 41(5) outlines the obligation to allocate resources for the rehabilitation and assistance of the physically and mentally disabled (FDRE Constitution, 1995).

Moreover, it recognizes international human rights treaties, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as having equal status in Ethiopia (FDRE Constitution, 1995). Article 13(2) further emphasizes the requirement for interpreting constitutional human rights provisions in alignment with Ethiopia's international treaty obligations (FDRE Constitution, 1995). This framework underscores the country's commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities (Desalegn, 2013).

2.9.2. Employment Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Ethiopia enacted specific legislation to protect the employment rights of PWDs through Proclamation No. 568/2008. This law aims to promote equal employment opportunities and prevent workplace discrimination against PWDs. Key provisions include:

Prohibiting the use of disability as a criterion in hiring, promotion, placement, or other employment decisions (Arts. 4-5) (Proclamation No. 568/2008).

Requiring employers to provide necessary equipment and accommodation to enable disabled person to perform their duties (Art. 5) (Proclamation No. 568/2008). Allowing PWDs to file grievances

against alleged disability-based discrimination without the burden of proof (Art. 7) (Proclamation No. 568/2008)

2.9.3. Ethiopian Building Proclamation 624/2009

The 2009 Building Proclamation of Ethiopia further reinforces the commitment to accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs), particularly those with physical impairments. Article 36 specifically mandates that public buildings must include means of access suitable for individuals who may require wheelchairs and those who can walk but cannot negotiate steps (Proclamation No. 624/2009, Sub-Art. 1). Additionally, the Proclamation requires the provision of an adequate number of accessible toilet facilities in these buildings (Proclamation No. 624/2009, Sub-Art. 2).

2.9.4. Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights of PWDs under FDRE Constitution

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution articulates a broad framework of economic, social, and cultural rights that encompass all Ethiopian citizens, including persons with disabilities (PWDs). Article 41 underscores the right of "every Ethiopian" to engage freely in economic activities and pursue various livelihoods, occupations, and professions (FDRE Constitution, 1995, Art. 41(1)). This provision implies that PWDs are entitled to equal access to economic opportunities and participation in national development.

Moreover, the Constitution obligates the state to allocate resources for providing essential public services, including health and education, to satisfy the basic needs of all citizens (FDRE Constitution, 1995, Art. 41(3-4)). Although these provisions do not explicitly mention disabilities, they can be interpreted as a mandate for the state to ensure that PWDs have equal access to publicly funded social services.

The Constitution also highlights the state's responsibility to "rehabilitate and assist the physically and mentally disabled" within available resource limits (FDRE Constitution, 1995, Art. 41(5)). This clause indicates a commitment to supporting the rehabilitation and social integration of PWDs into

society. However, the Constitution's addressing of PWDs' economic, social, and cultural rights is not as extensive as the protections afforded to other vulnerable populations, such as women and children. Beyond the general equality guarantee and the specific rehabilitation clause, there is a notable absence of detailed provisions recognizing the rights of PWDs in areas critical to their full participation, such as education, employment, accessibility, and cultural engagement.

While the Constitution does grant equal standing to Ethiopia's ratified international human rights treaties, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the specific execution of these treaty obligations remains inadequately addressed (FDRE Constitution, 1995, Art. 9(4)). This gap presents an opportunity for further legislative action and policy formulation to fully actualize the economic, social, and cultural rights of PWDs in Ethiopia. Thus, there is a pressing need for comprehensive strategies, targeted legal frameworks, and inclusive policies to ensure the rights and capabilities of persons with disabilities are effectively recognized and implemented.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted in three sub-cities of Addis Ababa: Arada, Kolfe Keranio, and Gulele. Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia and the headquarters of the African Union and various UN agencies, comprises eleven sub-cities. Arada sub-city, one of the oldest parts of Addis Ababa, had a population of 212,009 according to the 2007 national census (99,392 males and 112,617 females). It is known for its vibrant cultural and educational institutions, and it borders Gulele, Yeka, Kirkos, Lideta, and Addis Ketema sub-cities. Kolfe Keranio sub-city recorded a population of 428,654 in the same census (207,506 males and 221,148 females). Located in the city's western suburbs near the Gefersa Reservoir, it consists of 15 woredas and features several slum areas. It borders Gulele, Addis Ketema, Lideta, and Nifas Silk-Lafto.

Gulelesub-city had a population of 267,381 (129,239 males and 138,142 females) as of the 2007 census. Situated in the northern suburbs near Entoto Mountain and Entoto Park, it borders Kolfe Keranio, Addis Ketema, Arada, and Yeka.

3.2. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach. The rationale for this approach is that case studies are well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena from the perspective of the individuals and communities involved, rather than attempting to explain them from an external viewpoint (Yin, 2017).

Case studies enable researchers to deeply examine the meanings, perspectives, and subjective experiences of participants, allowing for a rich understanding of diverse viewpoints and motivations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This is particularly valuable for investigating complex issues that may be difficult to capture through quantitative methods alone. The researcher also adopted an exploratory

study design to uncover new insights about the selected research areas. This allowed for an open-ended investigation of the issues under study, rather than testing pre-determined hypotheses (Stebbins, 2001).

3.3. Sampling Technique

The researcher employed a purposive sampling strategy to collect in-depth information about the research topics. Purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting participants and study sites based on their direct experiences and understanding of the issues at hand (Patton, 2015). This allowed the researcher to gather rich, contextual data from information-rich sources.

3.4. Sample Size

For the qualitative data collection, the researcher conducted 15 in-depth interviews with individual participants, 10 key informant interviews, and 4 focus group discussions two in Kolfe Keranio sub city because of the reason that in this sub city there are many informants exist and one FGD in the two sub cities Arada and Gulele, each consisting of 6 participants, resulting in a total of 24 participants in the focus groups.

3.5. Methods of data collection

The researcher employed multiple qualitative data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topics. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 participants, allowing for a deep exploration of individual perspectives and insights. Additionally, the researcher facilitated 4 focus group discussions, each comprising 6 participants, totaling 24 participants, using purposive sampling techniques to ensure homogeneity and relevance.

The focus group discussion and in-depth interview guides were developed in the local Amharic language and were pilot tested for clarity. Observations were also carried out using both participant and non-participant methods to assess attitudes towards employees with disabilities, as well as to

document their physical work environments through photographs. In the observation the researcher observed the physical inaccessibility of the work place and the attitude of immediate supervisors and coworker of the visual impaired employees. Furthermore, key informant interviews were conducted with two government officials from the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, three professionals' human resource offices from the selected sub cities, two leader of disabled person organization (DPOs) and three supervisors of visually impaired employees to provide additional contextual information. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher collected primary data from the in-depth interviews and focus groups first, followed by key informant interviews to supplement and triangulate the findings.

3.6. Sources of Data

The researcher employed both primary and secondary data sources for this study. Primary sources included in-depth interviews with selected participants, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, all of which were conducted with individuals chosen through purposive sampling techniques to ensure their relevance to the research topic.

Secondary sources involved a review of relevant books, journals, and electronic media, as well as an examination of human resource manuals and employee handbooks from the selected sub-cities to provide additional context and insights.

3.7. Inclusion criteria

The researcher defined clear inclusion criteria for each category of participant.

3.7.1. Inclusion criteria for in-depth interview Respondents

Participants must meet several inclusion criteria to be eligible for the study. They should be employed by the city administration in one of the selected sub-cities, specifically Arada, Kolfe Keranio, or Gulele. Additionally, candidates must have a minimum of one year of work experience

in their respective roles. Furthermore, the study is focused on individuals with visual impairments, ensuring that their unique perspectives and experiences are adequately represented.

3.7.2. Focus Group Discussion Participants

To be eligible for participation, individuals must have visual impairments and be employed by the city administration in one of the selected sub-cities. Furthermore, they should have a minimum of six months of work experience in their current position. It's important to note that potential participants must not have taken part in any prior in-depth interviews related to this study. This criterion ensures that the perspectives and insights gathered are fresh and provide a comprehensive understanding of the current experiences of individuals within this specific context.

3.7.3. Key Informant Interview Participants

Eligible participants for this study include professionals working at the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, specifically within the Disability Directorate. Additionally, program managers and executive directors of disability-based organizations are invited to participate. It is essential that these individuals possess specialized expertise and knowledge related to employment for persons with disabilities, as their insights will be invaluable to the research. Furthermore, participants must be actively involved in addressing the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, ensuring that the perspectives gathered are grounded in practical experience and a commitment to improving outcomes for this population.

3.8. Data Analysis Methods

The researcher utilized thematic analysis to extract meaningful insights from the study's findings, following a structured approach. This process began with the transcription of recorded interviews, translating Amharic data into English for broader accessibility. Next, the transcribed data was coded to identify main ideas while minimizing potential bias. The coded data was then categorized into related themes, which facilitated the development of overarching themes that encapsulated the key

findings. Through this iterative process, the researcher successfully identified patterns and insights from both primary and secondary data sources, enriching the study's conclusions.

3.9. Ethical consideration

The researcher prioritized ethical conduct throughout the data collection process by implementing several key steps. First, informed consent was obtained by providing participants with clear explanations of the study's purpose, requiring both written and oral approval to ensure they fully understood their involvement.

The researcher also demonstrated sensitivity by avoiding emotionally charged questions that could cause distress, maintaining a respectful tone in all interactions. At the end of each session, participants were thanked and their contributions acknowledged, reinforcing their importance to the study. Additionally, measures were taken to safeguard confidentiality and privacy, including secure data storage and anonymous of responses. By adhering to these ethical principles, the researcher aimed to respect the rights, well-being, and dignity of all participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4. Data Presentation

The purpose of this study was to assess the challenges faced by visually impaired employees within the Addis Ababa city administration, with the aim of identifying these obstacles and proposing solutions to improve their working conditions. A total of 49 informants participated in the data collection process, which included 15 individuals in in-depth interviews, 10 in key informant interviews, and 24 in focus group discussions. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure the acquisition of valuable and in-depth information regarding the challenges experienced by visually impaired employees in three specific sub-cities: Kolfe Keranio, Gulele, and Arada. This comprehensive approach aimed to highlight the unique difficulties faced by this demographic and facilitate discussions around potential improvements in their work environments.

4.1 Key Informant Profile

1. Informants from the person with Disabilities Organizations (DPOS)

- Demographics: Two informants (1 male, 1 female) aged 40-50

Positions:

- One Program Manager
- One Executive Directress

Educational Background:

- One holds a Bachelor's degree in Law
- One holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Work

2. Human Resources Officers

- Number of Informants: Three (1 male, 2 females)
- Educational Background: All hold Bachelor's degrees in Management

- Work Experience: Each has 3-5 years of relevant work experience

3. Immediate Supervisors

- Number of Informants: Three
- Educational Background: All hold Bachelor's degrees in Management or Business Administration.
- Work Experience: Each has 6-10 years of relevant work experience

4. Informants from the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MOWSA)

- Number of Informants: Two (both male)

Educational Background:

- One holds a Master's degree in Social Work
- One holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology

4.2 Profiles of *in-depth interview and FGD informants*

Gender Composition of the Participants

Among the 39 participants, the majority were male, accounting for 22 individuals, while 17 participants were female. The slight male majority is reflective of the overall composition of visually impaired employees within the Addis Ababa city administration. This demographic breakdown highlights the importance of considering gender dynamics when addressing the challenges faced by visually impaired employees. It is particularly significant because female employees may face additional barriers related to both their disability and gender, such as greater difficulty in accessing resources or receiving equitable treatment in the workplace.

Age of the Participants

The participants were predominantly within the age range of 31 to 40 years, with 20 individuals falling into this category. This age group, which comprised more than half of the total participants, is

generally at the mid-career stage, highlighting the importance of long-term employment and professional development opportunities for visually impaired employees. Additionally, 12 participants were aged between 25 and 30 years, representing those who are relatively early in their careers, while 7 participants were aged between 41 and 50 years, indicating a smaller proportion of more experienced individuals. The age distribution of participants reveals that the majority of visually impaired employees is still developing their careers, and emphasizes the need for support mechanisms that foster their long-term growth and job stability.

Marital Status of the Participants

The study revealed that the majority of participants (21 out of 39) were single, while 12 participants were married, and 6 were divorced. This finding suggests that many visually impaired employees may still be in the process of establishing both their personal and professional lives. The correlation between marital status and work experience was noted, as participants with more years of work experience tended to be married, while those with fewer years of experience were more likely to be single. This trend underscores the role that job stability and work experience may play in shaping the personal lives of employees, particularly in terms of forming and maintaining familial relationships.

Educational Background of the Participants

In terms of educational qualifications, most participants (35 out of 39) held a bachelor's degree, reflecting a high level of academic achievement among visually impaired employees. Only 4 participants had attained a master's degree, indicating that there may be limited opportunities for further academic advancement for visually impaired employees. This lack of advanced degrees could be attributed to various barriers, including financial constraints, inaccessible educational resources, or the challenges of balancing work and study. The finding suggests the need for creating

more opportunities and support systems to help visually impaired employees pursue higher education, which in turn could enhance their career prospects and professional growth.

Fields of Study

The participants had diverse academic backgrounds, with many holding degrees in fields such as law, sociology, social work, and special needs education. The most common fields of study were law and sociology, each represented by 8 participants. Other fields included social work, special needs, and gender studies, reflecting a range of expertise relevant to the social sciences and public administration. The diversity in academic backgrounds suggests that visually impaired employees contribute across various sectors within the city administration, and that their educational qualifications equip them with the skills to perform effectively in their respective roles. However, it also underscores the need for specialized training and continuous professional development to address the specific challenges they face in the workplace.

Work Experience of the Participants

The participants' work experience varied significantly, with nearly half (19 out of 39) reporting between 2 and 5 years of experience, while 13 participants had between 6 and 10 years of experience, and 7 participants had more than 10 years of experience. This distribution indicates that the majority of visually impaired employees are still relatively early in their careers, which may influence their need for additional support in terms of career development, mentoring, and skills enhancement. Work experience was identified as a key factor in helping visually impaired employees navigate their work environments more effectively. Those with greater experience reported stronger coping mechanisms, greater confidence, and the ability to build supportive networks that helped them overcome challenges in the workplace.

Positions Held by the Participants

The participants held a wide range of positions within the city administration, with a significant proportion working in roles such as lawyers and professionals in the women and children affairs offices. Other participants worked as social security professionals, culture and tourism officers, and project preparation officers. The diverse range of positions highlights the varied contributions of visually impaired employees to the public service. However, it also indicates that these employees may encounter different types of challenges depending on their specific roles. For instance, employees working in more public-facing or administrative positions may face unique accessibility issues compared to those working in technical or specialized fields. Moreover, despite holding positions of responsibility, some participants reported facing discrimination or being overlooked for promotion, suggesting that organizational barriers still limit their career advancement.

The research incorporated key informant interviews with ten participants, including three immediate supervisors of visually impaired employees, three human resource officers at the sub-city level, two representatives from the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs', and two leaders' disability-focused organizations. These interviews were structured around several critical areas, including examining the relationship between employers and their visually impaired employees, identifying techniques utilized by offices to enhance disability awareness and improve working conditions, gathering suggestions for further enhancements, and discussing the common challenges faced by disability organizations and the Ministry in supporting visually impaired staff.

In addition, the study facilitated four focus group discussions (FGDs), each consisting of six participants from the selected three sub cities .The research aimed to explore several major thematic areas, such as employers' perceptions towards visually impaired employees, the specific needs and challenges faced by these individuals, potential solutions to enhance their workplace experience, and

the attitudinal barriers and socio-economic challenges they encounter. Furthermore, discussions delved into the physical accessibility issues within the workplace that hinder the effectiveness and integration of visually impaired employees. This multi-faceted approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in the employment landscape for visually impaired individuals in Addis Ababa.

4.3 Employers' Perceptions towards Visually Impaired Employees

Ethiopia, particularly in Addis Ababa, faces significant challenges in ensuring the full participation of persons with disabilities in the labor market. Despite existing legal frameworks promoting disability inclusion, visually impaired individuals encounter numerous barriers. Many employers hold negative assumptions, believing that visually impaired employees are less capable, uneducated, or unable to perform job tasks effectively. This leads to discrimination and unfair competition for job seekers with visual disabilities.

Key informants noted that employers often have attitudinal biases that discourage the hiring of visually impaired individuals. Additionally, these job seekers face information barriers, such as inaccessible job advertisements, which complicate their job search. The preference for hiring based on recommendations also disadvantages them, as they may lack social networks and connections.

Experiences of discrimination were shared by participants, some of whom considered legal action but hesitated due to fear of repercussions affecting their family responsibilities. Disturbingly, some employers have interrogated candidates about their visual impairments, with one instance of an employer outright questioning their safety due to their disability.

4.3.1 Discrimination in the Job Application Process

Several study participants, including y1, y2, y3, y4, y5, y6, and y14, reported experiencing discrimination during the job application process, particularly when applying in person at an

employer's office. In these cases, the employers often dismissed their applications, stating that the positions were not suitable for them or that they were unable to perform the job. This type of discrimination had a negative impact on the participants' morale and self-confidence. Discussing this issues Y1, states the following:

I deliberately omitted mentioning my disability both on my CV and job application, fearing rejection. After passing the initial selection process, I was invited for a test, where the employers were visibly confused upon realizing that I was visually impaired. Despite the awkward situation, I managed to convince them to allow me to take the test, eventually excelling in both the written exam and interview. However, once hired, I faced skepticism from the institution's management, who questioned my competence due to my disability. Y1

4.3.2 Employer Misconceptions and Lack of Awareness

The findings also suggest that employers hold misconceptions and stereotypes about the capabilities of persons with disabilities, believing they are less productive, more likely to be absent, or require special treatment. Additionally, there appears to be a lack of awareness among employers about disability rights and the potential benefits of employing persons with disabilities, leading to discriminatory practices and a lack of sensitivity towards their needs. Commenting on this key informant from the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs said that,

There is a tendency to think that all disabled people are the same. Employers and staff often make hasty generalizations. For example, if they previously encountered a visually impaired employee with ethical issues, they assume that newly hired visually impaired employees will also be unethical. The same applies to other characteristics as well.

4.3.3 Experiences of Rewards and Recognition

The study participants reported varying experiences in receiving recognition and rewards from their employers. While some, including y1, y3, y4, y5, y6, y8, y9, y10, y12, y14, and y15, received monetary bonuses, certificates, mobile phones, and verbal encouragement for their work performance, others, such as y2, y7, y11, and y13, had not received any material or verbal rewards.

One participant, y12, expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which the employer gave a bonus during a holiday period. They felt that this timing diminished the value of the reward, as it was perceived as a form of financial assistance rather than a genuine recognition of their accomplishments.

4.3.4 Concerns from the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs

The key informants from the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs' disability directorate mentioned that visually impaired employees and job seekers frequently approach the office with concerns related to discrimination in internal development, lack of promotion opportunities, and inaccessibility issues in the workplace.

4.3.5 Unfair Treatment and Favoritism in the Workplace

Participant's y2, y7, y11, and y13 reported that they often face unfair treatment in the workplace. They described situations where supervisors and managers may favor those who are close to them and provide preferential treatment, while neglecting those who perform well. One informant indicated that

Employers do not treat everyone fairly. They favor those who are close to them and give irrelevant information. 'ለሚለፈለፈው እና ጠጋ ጠጋ ለሚለው ያዳለሉ' (They only favor those they prefer). They don't provide appropriate treatment for those who do their work properly, and they discriminate against persons with disabilities, especially visually impaired

employees. Instead of measuring employees based on their work and abilities, being visually impaired leads to discrimination and unfair treatment. Y7

4.3.6 Performance Appraisals and Dissatisfaction

The study found that the organization conducted performance appraisals every six months, involving team leaders and coworkers in a participatory manner. Participant's y6, y8, y9, y10, y12, and y14 reported receiving positive performance evaluations, with scores exceeding 80%.

However, participant's y2, y7, y11, and y13 expressed dissatisfaction with the results of their performance evaluations. They felt that their performance was not adequately recognized, and that the lack of necessary work equipment and assistive support hindered their ability to perform at their best.

Additionally, participant's y1, y3, y4, y5, and y15 perceived that the performance evaluation criteria were not effectively used to assess work performance. They suggested that the organization conducted the appraisals in a perfunctory manner, without strictly following the results as inputs for administrative decisions such as promotions, training, and salary increments.

4.3.7 Limited Understanding and Support from HR

The informant interviews indicated that some staff, supervisors, and HR personnel have a limited understanding and support for visually impaired employees. Despite the existence of supportive provisions in the Human Resources Guide for employing persons with disabilities, HR personnel often lack familiarity with these provisions, resulting in inadequate responses when detailed information is requested.

This gap in knowledge among HR personnel is a significant barrier to the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the workplace. Informants highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive training and support for HR staff to ensure they understand their responsibilities and

obligations under the law. Additionally, the sub-city's human resource department was noted to lack innovative strategies to improve the working conditions for visually impaired employees and exhibited a limited understanding of reasonable accommodations.

4.3.8 Lack of Innovative Support and Understanding of Reasonable Accommodation

The study revealed that the lack of innovative support and limited understanding of reasonable accommodation among HR personnel is a significant obstacle to the full and equal participation of visually impaired employees in the workplace. It was emphasized that HR personnel need to receive comprehensive training and support to develop a deeper understanding of the needs of visually impaired employees. This would enable them to identify and implement innovative solutions to improve the working conditions for visually impaired employees. Y11 commented on this, saying the following:

The support of the employer depends on the activeness, commitment, and cognition of the visually impaired person. If we request appropriate support or help from the employer, without tireless effort on my part, they do try to support us. Y11

4.3.9 Accessibility and Environmental Challenges

Informants reported that the office environment posed challenges for visually impaired employees, as it was noisy due to the close proximity of workstations, making it difficult for them to effectively use assistive technology like JAWS. Furthermore, the physical spaces of the work areas lacked accessibility, with non-functional elevators and an unsuitable office layout featuring numerous stairs and uneven surfaces.

This idea was echoed by participants from FGD1 and 2 group stating :

The office is not quiet. Many staff uses the office in a cramped seating arrangement, and the noise level is not suitable for working with the support of JAWS. Because of this, we are

forced to use head set at a high volume, and we fear that this may lead to hearing loss in the near future. FGD group 1 and 2

A key informant from one of the leaders of an organization for people with disabilities said that, “their office frequently deals with complaints about being placed in inaccessible locations whenever the government restructures or merges institution.”

4.3.10 Barriers to Career Advancement

The key informant interview with the Ethiopian Lawyers with Disability Association and the FGD discussion highlighted that visually impaired employees often encounter obstacles in attaining leadership positions within organizations. They also have limited access to training and development programs that are essential for professional growth and career advancement. Additionally, visually impaired employees are often unfairly overlooked for promotions and professional development opportunities, and face challenges in securing internships and transitioning into permanent roles, despite their qualifications and abilities.

4.3.11 Supervisors' Limited Understanding and Negative Perceptions

The study found during focus group discussion and in-depth interview prove that that supervisors of visually impaired employees have limited understanding about disabilities, the specific needs of visually impaired employees in the workplace, and the benefits of employing persons with disabilities. This lack of understanding often leads to negative perceptions and unfair treatment of visually impaired employees. However, the study also identified some supervisors who have a good understanding of disability and treat visually impaired employees in an equal and respectful manner, providing the necessary support and accommodations to create a more positive and inclusive work environment.

The limited understanding and negative perceptions among supervisors of visually impaired employees is a significant barrier to their full and equal participation in the workplace. It is essential that supervisors receive comprehensive training and support to develop a deeper understanding of the needs of visually impaired employees and to create a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

4.4 Needs of Visually Impaired Employees, challenges and Suggested Solutions

The study participants highlighted several key needs and challenges faced by visually impaired employees in the workplace. They emphasized the importance of providing basic materials and assistive devices that are essential for visually impaired employees to perform their job responsibilities effectively. These include items such as Braille paper, slates, styluses, white canes, and screen reading software like JAWS.

Additionally, the participants stressed the need for disability awareness training, not only for the staff who work with visually impaired employees, but also for the visually impaired employees themselves. This training would help to enhance understanding and create a more inclusive work environment.

4.4.1 Challenges in Obtaining Necessary Resources

The study revealed through FGD and in-depth interview employers often fail to provide necessary accommodations and materials for visually impaired employees, leading to significant delays and frustrations. Participants attributed these issues to the bureaucratic processes of procurement and finance departments, which hinder timely responses and create a perception of limited funding. Many employees waited over two years for essential resources, with the lack of needs assessments exacerbating the situation. The absence of assistive technology, such as JAWS screen readers, forced some employees to incur costs to secure installations themselves.

Efforts to raise disability awareness were insufficient, typically limited to a single annual event and ineffective in changing attitudes among non-disabled employees. Additionally, standard transportation provided by employers was often inaccessible, complicating commuting for visually impaired staff. The Ethiopian Lawyers with Disabilities Association (ELDA) was noted for its advocacy and initiatives to improve employment conditions for individuals with disabilities.

Key recommendations for improvement included ensuring timely provision of assistive equipment, hiring qualified assistants, conducting comprehensive disability training, monitoring compliance with disability rights laws; develop clear job description for assistants and creating accessible workspaces for visually impaired employees.

4.4.2 The need of assistance and challenges faced

Visually impaired employees faced challenges related to the employers' provision of assistants. The informants reported not having assistance for long periods of time due to issues such as a bureaucratic hiring process, inadequate compensation, short-term contracts, and a lack of awareness and training among assistants. The unavailability of qualified and reliable assistants hindered employees' ability to perform their jobs effectively, increased their workload, and reduced their productivity.

4.4.2.1 The Role of Assistants

The study participants confirmed the need for personal assistants to help them with various tasks. The assistants supported them by reading hard copy documents, writing in hard copy, assisting with walking, taking notes during training and meetings, and helping with field work and monitoring activities that required visual skills.

4.4.2.2 Challenges Related to Assistants

The study participants also described the challenges they faced in relation to the provision of assistants. Employers had a high level of bureaucracy for hiring assistants, resulting in a long and arduous process. The criteria and qualifications expected for the assistants did not match the compensation provided, making it difficult to find suitable candidates. Additionally, the assistants were often hired on short-term contracts, which made the work unappealing and led to high turnover. The informants also reported that the assistants often lacked the necessary skills, such as proper writing, computer operation, and communication with visually impaired employees. The lack of clear job descriptions and capacity-building training for the assistants further exacerbated the issues, resulting in poor job performance, low motivation, and a negative impact on the visually impaired employees' productivity.

4.4.2.3 Consequences of the Assistance Gaps

The participants of the study by FGD and in-depth interview highlighted the following major challenges they faced due to the gaps in the provision of qualified and reliable assistants:

Unmet Support Needs: The unavailability of qualified and reliable assistants hindered employees' ability to perform their jobs effectively.

Increased Workload: Employees had to take on additional tasks that would normally be handled by assistants, leading to increased workload and stress.

Reduced Productivity: The lack of adequate assistance reduced the visually impaired employees' productivity and efficiency.

4.5 Perception from Visually Impaired Individuals on Challenges and Experiences in Securing and Maintaining Employment

The study explored the employment experiences of visually impaired individuals, noting that they often start their job search in the private sector before moving to positions in sub-city administration, facing discrimination and negative attitudes from employers. On average, it takes visually impaired employees approximately 2 years and 5 months to secure a job after graduation, while law graduates find work in about a year.

Participants encountered numerous challenges, such as difficulties accessing job advertisements in accessible formats and coping with the uncertainties of unfamiliar environments and housing expenses. Employer biases, along with reliance on word-of-mouth recruitment, further limited job prospects for visually impaired individuals.

Participants came from the regional states for searching job faced additional obstacles, such as navigating unfamiliar surroundings, renting housing, and covering basic expenses, which added financial burdens and stress.

Job experiences; varied by sector, with those in the justice sector finding employment more quickly than those in social sciences. Some participants reported dwindling morale due to perceived inequities and lack of advancement opportunities, while others found satisfaction in their work despite some issues like budget constraints and political interference.

One participant realized the benefits of expanding job searches beyond Addis Ababa after a field visit. To improve working conditions for visually impaired employees, participants suggested solutions such as providing assistive equipment, hiring qualified assistants, conducting disability awareness training, ongoing training for support staff HR personnel and immediate bosses , developing clear job roles for assistants , monitoring compliance with disability rights provide on job training for Assistant , and creating accessible office environments.

4.6 Attitudinal barriers and socio-economic challenges of visual impaired employees.

Observations during the study and the during the FGD discussion indicated that customers were often hesitant to request services from visually impaired employees due to preconceived notions.

The interview participants highlighted both attitudinal barriers and socio-economic challenges they face as visually impaired employees. One participant noted that limited participation in social activities stems from both personal preferences and external factors, such as organizational isolation due to disability and a lack of understanding about the contributions of blind individuals. Although social committees seek financial support from employees, those with visual impairments are often excluded from planning or participating in events.

Interactions among visually impaired employees and their colleagues tend to be limited, attributed to a general lack of awareness and negative attitudes towards disabilities. Participants noted that their upbringing and prior experiences, including attendance at a boarding school focused on academics, have left them less familiar with workplace social norms and expectations. Additionally, a non-welcoming organizational culture and colleagues' attitudes reinforce their isolation. Informant Y8 saying the following about the above points as follows:

One informant shared whenever there is social gathering in and out the office among the staffs colleagues they usually tend to exclude us from those events stating that our presence is not valued do not even invite us and they do not care . And the informants expressed the situation in this Amharic short phrase “**አንች ባትመጭ አሁን ማን ያማካል.**” Y8

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries, which have not kept pace with the rising cost of living, resulting in significant financial strain. They face unique expenses related to their disabilities, such as relying on Ride and Lada taxis due to inaccessible public transport and incurring higher meal costs because of limited affordable food options. This financial burden contributes to their dissatisfaction with their jobs.

Furthermore, they noted limited opportunities for additional income beyond their primary employment, hindered by societal attitudes and the nature of their work. Some have attempted minor trading to supplement income but face difficulties due to restrictions by city administration. Among the participants, four have children, but economic hardships and divorce have led to some children living with relatives rather than with their parents, further highlighting the financial strain these individuals experience.

4.7 The physical accessibility challenges and Management techniques used

The study participants identified significant physical accessibility challenges in the workplace. Study participants noted that the building's elevators lack Braille labels and sound systems, making independent navigation difficult. Other areas, such as recreation spaces, corridors, and cafes, were also reported as not being easily accessible. Additionally, furniture arrangement posed obstacles, hindering safe movement around the office. Ongoing construction added to the difficulty, with equipment and materials obstructing pathways, particularly in inclement weather.

Transportation services provided by the organization were deemed inaccessible, as the schedule does not accommodate their needs, and significant walking is required, which is problematic during rainy seasons. Participants primarily communicate these challenges to their supervisors and higher officials but expressed frustration with the lack of support or action taken to resolve the issues. One individual commented on the discouragement they feel when discussing problems leads to no meaningful solutions.

To cope with these challenges, participants have developed several strategies. Building strong relationships with colleagues and neighbors has proven beneficial, providing essential support and assistance. Sharing experiences with others facing similar challenges has offered guidance and encouragement. Additionally, some participants have learned to recognize their limitations, leading them to let go of certain tasks to avoid stress and burnout.



Image for Figure 1: uncovered pipes in road around work place



Figure 1.1: Inaccessible pedestrian road around workplace, with construction materials blocking the path.

4.8 Summary of Major Findings

The purpose of this study was to assess the challenges faced by visually impaired employees in their workplaces within the Addis Ababa city administration. The research aimed to identify the

challenges experienced by visual impaired employees and propose solutions to improve their working conditions.

The findings reveal that the number of visually impaired employees is relatively low compared to the total workforce in each sub-city, and there is a significant gender disparity, with fewer visually impaired women employed than men. However, visually impaired employees, on average, are hired within 2 years and 5 months after graduation, with law graduates being hired even sooner, at around 1 year after graduation.

Prior to securing employment, many visually impaired individuals attempt to find work in the private sector, but often face discrimination and negative attitudes from potential employers, limiting their job opportunities. They encounter various obstacles during job searches, including inaccessible job postings, difficulties obtaining complete information about vacancies, and negative employer attitudes stemming from misconceptions about their capabilities.

Even after securing employment, visually impaired employees face additional challenges in the workplace. They may find the overall work culture, procedures, salaries, and office atmosphere unsupportive or unaccommodating. Employers and supervisors often exhibit biased or unequal treatment towards visually impaired employees, limiting their access to training, promotion opportunities, job assignments, and necessary materials.

Furthermore, organizations frequently hire unqualified or poorly trained assistants for visually impaired employees, without providing clear job descriptions or professional development opportunities.

The physical accessibility challenges faced by visually impaired employees are significant, with issues such as inaccessible buildings, elevators, cafeterias, and pedestrian paths, as well as construction materials and parked vehicles obstructing pathways and posing safety hazards.

Visually impaired employees also encounter social and economic challenges, including negative attitudes from colleagues, supervisors, and others in the organization, as well as financial difficulties due to low salaries and limited income sources. Women with visual impairments face even greater barriers, as gender discrimination intersects with disability discrimination, limiting their opportunities for advancement and fair treatment.

To address these challenges, visually impaired employees suggest various solutions, including providing on-the-job training in basic computer skills and assistive technology use, creating dedicated, quiet, and accessible workspaces, promptly procuring necessary materials, hiring qualified assistants with appropriate training and support, and making the workplace more accessible by removing obstacles and providing necessary technology.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1. Challenges Faced by Visually Impaired Employees

The findings of this study underscore the profound and multifaceted challenges faced by visually impaired employees in the workplace in Addis Ababa. These challenges reflect systemic issues that hinder the full participation of visually impaired individuals in the workforce, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and marginalization.

One of the most pervasive challenges identified is the negative perceptions and attitudes of employers towards hiring and retaining visually impaired workers. Employers often hold deep-seated biases and misconceptions about the capabilities of visually impaired individuals, perceiving them as less capable or productive compared to their sighted counterparts. This reflects the lingering influence of the charity model of disability, where persons with disabilities (PWDs) are viewed as dependent, pitiable, and in need of care rather than as equal and capable members of society (Kanter, 2015). Such perceptions not only limit employment opportunities but also create a culture of low expectations, further disenfranchising visually impaired individuals.

The study also revealed significant gaps in the provision of assistive technologies, accommodations, and support services for visually impaired employees. Employers frequently fail to provide necessary tools such as screen readers, braille displays, or materials in accessible formats, leaving visually impaired workers unable to perform their duties effectively. This lack of accommodation contravenes the principles of the human rights approach to disability, which emphasizes the right of PWDs to reasonable accommodations and equal opportunities in the workplace (United Nations, 2006). These oversights highlight a disconnect between policy commitments to disability inclusion and their practical implementation.

Physical accessibility emerged as another critical issue. Many workplaces in Addis Ababa lack the necessary infrastructure to accommodate visually impaired employees, including tactile pathways, accessible entrances, and clear navigation systems. The absence of accessible transportation further compounds this issue, creating additional barriers for visually impaired employees attempting to commute independently and safely to work. This finding aligns with broader research emphasizing the necessity of universal design and accessibility in promoting workplace inclusion for PWDs (Schur et al., 2017).

The study also highlighted the significant role of workplace culture in shaping the experiences of visually impaired employees. Negative attitudes and a lack of understanding from coworkers often led to social isolation and difficulties integrating into the workplace. These attitudinal and stigma-related barriers undermine the ability of visually impaired employees to form meaningful professional relationships and participate fully in workplace activities. Research has consistently shown that such stigma and prejudice can erode self-esteem and limit the professional growth of PWDs (Hernandez et al., 2008).

Beyond workplace-specific challenges, visually impaired employees face broader economic and social hardships that exacerbate their marginalization. Many encounter additional costs associated with their disability, such as purchasing assistive devices or securing specialized transportation services. These financial burdens, coupled with the low wages often earned by PWDs, create significant economic strain. Social isolation and limited access to education and vocational training further compound these difficulties, reducing opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

The challenges faced by visually impaired employees in Addis Ababa are interconnected, with physical, attitudinal, and socioeconomic barriers reinforcing one another. For example, the lack of accessible education directly affects employability, while insufficient income limits access to

assistive devices that could enhance workplace inclusion. The cumulative effect of these challenges is the systemic exclusion of visually impaired individuals from equal employment opportunities.

In conclusion, this study highlights the urgent need for a shift from the charity model of disability to a rights-based and inclusive approach. Addressing the challenges faced by visually impaired employees requires not only the provision of reasonable accommodations and accessible infrastructure but also a fundamental change in societal attitudes towards disability. By fostering greater understanding and dismantling structural barriers, workplaces can move toward meaningful inclusion, ensuring that visually impaired individuals are valued and empowered members of the workforce. These findings call for sustained commitment and action to create a more equitable labor market for visually impaired employees in Addis Ababa.

5.2. Implications for Social Work Practice

The findings of this study have important implications for social work practice in supporting the employment and inclusion of visually impaired individuals. Social workers can play a crucial role in advocating for policy and organizational changes to improve accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and anti-discrimination protections for PWDs in the workplace.

Social workers can work directly with visually impaired clients to build their self-advocacy skills, connect them with assistive technologies and support services, and facilitate their job search and workplace integration processes. Providing counseling and support services to address the psychosocial impacts of disability-related challenges can also be an important aspect of social work practice in this area.

Importantly, social workers must also engage in broader awareness-raising and educational efforts to challenge negative societal attitudes and misconceptions about the capabilities of visually impaired

individuals. By working at the individual, organizational, and societal levels, social workers can help to foster a more inclusive and equitable employment landscape for this marginalized population.

5.3. Implications for Policymakers

The study's findings point to the need for strengthened policy and legislative frameworks to protect the employment rights of visually impaired individuals and ensure they have access to necessary accommodations and support services. Policymakers should consider:

- Enacting robust anti-discrimination laws that mandate reasonable accommodation for PWDs in the workplace
- Investing in programs and initiatives to improve the physical accessibility of workplaces and public transportation
- Providing financial incentives and subsidies to employers to offset the costs of accommodating visually impaired workers
- Implementing quotas or affirmative action policies to increase the representation of PWDs in the public and private sector workforce
- Expanding access to vocational training, job placement services, and other support programs tailored to the needs of visually impaired jobseekers

By addressing the multifaceted barriers identified in this study through comprehensive policy reforms, policymakers can help to create a more equitable and inclusive employment landscape for visually impaired Ethiopians.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

Given the limited existing research on the employment challenges faced by visually impaired individuals in the Ethiopian context, this study represents an important initial exploration of this

issue. However, further research is needed to build a more robust evidence base and guide interventions.

Future studies could expand the geographic scope to include a broader range of urban and rural settings, as well as investigate the experiences of visually impaired employees across different sectors and industries. Comparative analyses examining the relative challenges faced by visually impaired workers versus employees with other types of disabilities would also be valuable.

Additionally, longitudinal research tracking the long-term employment trajectories and socioeconomic outcomes of visually impaired Ethiopians would provide crucial insights. Qualitative investigations delving deeper into the lived experiences and perspectives of this population could also complement the findings of this study.

Ultimately, rigorous, context-specific research is needed to inform the development of evidence-based policies, programs, and interventions that can enhance the employment inclusion and economic empowerment of visually impaired individuals in Ethiopia.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusion

This study explored the challenges faced by visually impaired employees in the Arada, Kolfe Keranio, and Gulele sub-cities of Addis Ababa. The key findings indicate that visually impaired employees continue to face significant barriers in the workplace, including negative employer perceptions, lack of reasonable accommodations, physical accessibility challenges, and socio-economic difficulties.

One of the critical challenges identified is the prevalence of stigmatized attitudes among employers regarding the abilities of visually impaired individuals. Many employers hold misconceptions, often perceiving visually impaired employees as less competent or overly reliant on resources. Such prejudiced views not only limit employment opportunities for visually impaired job seekers but also perpetuate systemic exclusion. These attitudes discourage employers from making efforts to provide an inclusive environment and exacerbate the underemployment of this population.

For visually impaired individuals who manage to secure employment, the workplace environment itself often presents significant hurdles. A lack of reasonable accommodations, such as access to assistive devices or adaptive technologies, creates obstacles to their productivity and independence. Similarly, the absence of adequate mobility support and the inaccessibility of physical spaces, including offices, restrooms, and transportation facilities, further restrict their ability to thrive professionally. These conditions underscore the disconnect between policies promoting inclusivity and their practical implementation in the workplace.

The challenges faced by visually impaired individuals extend beyond their professional lives. Broader socio-economic difficulties compound their marginalization, limiting their capacity to lead fulfilling lives. Many visually impaired individuals experience restricted access to education and

vocational training, leaving them ill-equipped to compete in the job market. Furthermore, the prevalence of low incomes among visually impaired workers highlights the disparity in economic opportunities. Social isolation, often a byproduct of exclusionary practices and environments, exacerbates these challenges, reinforcing a cycle of disadvantage.

The study also underscores the inter-sectionality of barriers, where workplace, social, and economic challenges interconnect to amplify the difficulties experienced by visually impaired individuals. For instance, inadequate access to education and training directly impacts employability, while insufficient income limits access to assistive technologies or services that could enhance workplace inclusion. These interrelated factors highlight the systemic nature of the challenges faced by visually impaired employees.

Overall, the findings of this study illustrate the urgent need for transformative change to address these barriers. Visually impaired employees in Addis Ababa remain at a significant disadvantage, unable to fully participate in the workforce due to entrenched societal biases, insufficient workplace support, and structural inequalities. These findings call for a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach to foster inclusivity and ensure the equitable participation of visually impaired individuals in the workforce.

In conclusion, the plight of visually impaired employees reflects broader societal attitudes and systemic inadequacies that undermine inclusivity and equity. Addressing these challenges requires a commitment to understanding and dismantling the barriers that hinder their participation. By acknowledging the interrelated nature of these issues and striving for meaningful change, society can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for visually impaired individuals to thrive.

6.2. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Employers: Adhere to the responsibilities outlined in Article 6 of Proclamation 568/2008, including promoting employment opportunities and removing barriers for persons with disabilities.
2. Ministry of Women and Social Affairs: Monitor employer compliance with Proclamation 568/2008 and enforce penalties for non-compliance.
3. Employers: Train human resource staff on disability awareness and reasonable accommodations.
4. Employers: Comply with Proclamation 56/2018, particularly Article 49 outlining specific working conditions for persons with disabilities.
5. Disability Organizations: Develop and implement projects to address employment challenges and promote positive attitudes towards employing persons with disabilities.
6. Civil Society Organizations: Provide support to organizations representing persons with disabilities to ensure transparency, accountability, and collaboration in implementing disability-inclusion initiatives.
7. Ministry of Innovation and Technology: Focus on developing assistive devices for visually impaired individuals to support their job creation and wealth-generating potential through technology and innovation.

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APPENDIX A. LIST QUESTIONS

The aim of this study is to assess the challenges of visual impaired employees in their respective work places. I am doing resear on this area. This research is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters of Social Work degree in Addis Ababa University. This questionnaire prepared is prepared to collect pertaining data for this issue. The information you will give may help to improve the situations of people with visual loss at work places. Design community.

This study will keep your name and your work areas confidential. Only the researchers will know your name and household. For the purposes of research analysis, individual responses to the interview questions will be added together, and all information from the study will be presented in summary .We may also use the information for academic purposes like presentations and publication.

Completion of the questioner implies your consent to participate in the study.

Part I

Background Information

1. Age in completed years _____
2. Sex 1- Male 2-Female
3. Religion 1- Orthodox, 2- Muslim 3- Catholic, 4- Protestant, 5- Adventist 6- Other
Specify_____
4. Marital Status 1- Single 2- Married 3- Divorced 4- Separated 5- Widowed
5. Level of Education

1- Grade 12 completed

- a. Elementary complete d. high school complete
b. College Diploma e –University bachelor Degree f-Masters
C, Other Specify _____

6. Specify you're major in your university education_____

7. Specify your work experience 1. 0-1 years 2.2-5 years 3 6-10 years 4 above 10 years

8. Specify your position of work_____

Part II

1. Do you have children? 1- Yes 2- no

2. If your answer is yes how many children's do you have _____

3. Do all of your children live with you? 1- Yes 2- no If your answer is no, what is the reason ----

I would like you to answer me the following questions which related to the perception of your employer

1. How did you get your current job?

Describe how you were able to get this job?

2. Do you like your job? yes / No .How do you like it? describe the reason

3. Have you ever been rewarded either materially or verbally by your employer? 1 yes 2
No?

If yes, what was the incentive you got?

4. Does your employer support you?

If yes, how?

5. Does your employer treat everybody equally and fairly?

Describe how your work supervisor/manage treat you.

6. Do you participate in making decisions?

Do you think you are good at providing your inputs?

7. How is your overall work performance

Part III assessing the needs of employed person with disabilities at work

1. Does your organization fulfill the necessary materials for your work?

2. Is your computer installed with Jaws application? a yes b no

3. Do you have an assistant hired by your organization a yes b no

If yes, how does he/she help _____

If no, do you need one? For what purpose?

4. Does your organization provide disability awareness raising programs for the staffs?

Have you ever participated in such programs? If yes, what did you benefit? Explain

Part IV

Assessing the perception in finding jobs and maintaining their employment

1. Tell me your job search experience? What were the challenges?

2. How long did you take to find the job you have now?

Part V

Assessing the physical environmental challenges of employed person with disabilities.

1. Do you face any challenges regarding the accessibility of your work place? Explain?

2. Do you discuss your challenges with your colleagues, supervisors or other relevant bodies?

What are the physical barriers you face in relation to your work place?

3. How do you mitigate those environmental challenges you encounter?

Part VI

Assessing the socio-economic challenges of employed person with disabilities

1. Do you actively participate in social activities at you work? 1 yes 2 No if your answer is no describe the reason?
2. How do you describe your interaction with your colleagues and immediate supervisors?
3. Describe the basic challenges that affect your social participation in your work environment?
4. Are you satisfied with your salary? Explain.
5. How much are you satisfied with your work?
6. Do you have other income sources beside yond your work?

Discussion Guide for FGD

1. How do you see the employment procedures in this organization?
2. What are the attitudes of the staff towards their work, supervisors and the organization?
3. What do you think should be done to improve the working conditions of the staff with vision loss?
4. What are the main challenges you are facing at your work place?
5. What should be done to ameliorate those challenges?
6. What do you do to cope with problems you face at work place?
7. How convenient is the structure of the organization in which you work? Explain.

Interview guide for MoWSA

1. Can you describe cases that employed staff with disability come to your office?
2. What are the major complaints you hear from the staff?
3. How do you describe your relationships with employers of PWDs?

Interview guide for sub city Human Resource offices

1. How do you see the inclusiveness of your office in hiring person with disabilities?

2. What are the basic reasonable accommodation methods your offices provide for employees with disabilities elaborate it?
3. Describe the content of your HR manual in favor of person with disabilities?
4. What techniques do you use to enhance the awareness of your employees towards disabilities?

Interview guide for immediate supervisors

1. Describe the relationship with your employee?
2. What are the strength and weakness of your employee in your perspectives?
3. How do you assign jobs for your employees?

Interview guide for Organizations of Person with Disabilities

1. What are the most frequent cases that your organization receives from staff with vision loss?
2. Does your organization have project, programs and initiatives that support and equip employed person with disabilities?
3. In your perspective what do you think should be done to solve the problems of the staff with vision loss?

መጠይቅ

የጥናቱ ዓላማ

የዚህ ጥናት ዋና አላማ በስራ ላይ ያሉ አይነ ስዉራን በስራ ቦታቸው የሚያጋጥሟቸውን ተግዳሮቶች ማወቅ ነዉ። ይህ ጥናት የሚከናወነዉ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ሶሻል ወርክ ድህረ ምረቃ ትምህረት መመረቂያ ማሟያ ይሆን ዘንድ ነዉ ።ከእናንተ የሚገኘዉ መረጃ ማህበረሰቡን የሚጠቅም ፕሮጀክት ለመንደፍ እንዲሁም ለተጨማሪ ጥናታዊ ጽሁፍ መነሻነት ሊረዳ ይችላል።

ለጥናቱ አስፈላጊ የሆኑ አካል ጉዳተኞችን በዋናነት አይነስዉራንን ያጠቃልላል። በዚህ ጥናት ዉስጥ አለመሳተፍና በፈለጉት ጊዜ ማቋረጥ ይችላሉ። ለዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ምላሽ ባለመስጠትዎ ከአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲም ይሁን ከክፍለ ከተማ ፣ ከወረዳ አስተዳደር እና ከመስሪያቤታችሁ የሚደርስባችሁ ጉዳት አይኖርም።

መጠይቁ የእርስዎንም ሆነ የቤተሰብዎን ማንነት አያሳዉቅም ።የዕርስዎን ማንነት የሚያዉቀዉ ጥናቱን የሚሰራዉ ግለሰብ ብቻ ነዉ ።የዚህ ጥናት መረጃ የሚቀርበዉ የሁሉም ምላሽ በአንድነት ተጨምቆ በጥቅል ይሆናል።መረጃዉ ለትምህርታዊ አላማ ለህትመት ሊዉል ይችላል።

ይህንን ጥናት መልሰዉ ማጠናቀቅዎት በጥናቱ ለመሳተፍ መስማማተዎን ማመላከቻ ተደርጎ ይወሰዳል ።

የጥናቱ ተሳታፊ ፊርማ

ክፍል I

ግላዊ መረጃ

1. ዕድሜ በዓመት ይገለጽ_____

2. ጾታ፡ 1 ወንድ____ 2-ሴት____

3. ሃይማኖት 1.አርቶዶክስ ____ 2- ሙስሊም ____ 3- ካቶሊክ ____ 4- ፕሮቴስታንት ____ 5
አድቪንቲስት ____ 6 ሌላ ይግለጹ ____

4. የጋብቻ ሁኔታ 1ያገባ/ች ____ 2 - ያላገባ/ች ____ 3 - የተፋታ/ች ____ 4 የተለየ/ች ____ 5 - ባል/ሚስት
የሞተባት ____

5. የትምህርት ደረጃ: 1- 12ኛ ክፍል ያጠናቀ ____ 2 ____ ደረጃ I-IV ____ 3 ዲፕሎማ 4 ዲግሪ ____ 5-
ማስተርስ ____ 6- ፒኤችዲ ____ ሌላ ይግለጹ ____

6.በምን የትምህርት መስክ አንደተመረቁ ይግለጹ _____

7. የስራ ልምድዎን ይግለጹ 1. 0-1 አመት ____ 2. 2-5 አመት ____ 3 .6-10 አመት ____ 4 ከ10 አመት በላይ ____

8. በመሰሪያቤትዎ ያለዎትን የስራ ድርሻ ይግለጹ _____

ክፍል II

1. ልጆች አሉዎት ወይ? 1 ____ አለኝ 2 የለኝም ____

2. መልስዎ አዎ ከሆነ ስንት ልጆች አሉዎት _____

3. ሁሉም ልጆችዎ ከእርስዎ ጋር ይኖራሉ? 1.ይኖራሉ ____ 2. ____ አይኖሩም

መልዎ አይደለም ከሆነ ምክናየቱን ያብራሩ? _____

ከቀጣሪዎ አመለካከት ጋር የተያያዙ የሚከተሉትን ጥያቄዎች እንዲመልሱልኝ እፈልጋለሁ

1.የአሁኑ ስራዎ ላይ እንዴት ተቀጠሩ? ስራዎትን አንዴት ማግኘት እንደቻሉ ያብራሩ?

2.ስራዎን ይወዳሉ? ሀ እወዳለሁ ለ አልወድም ፤ እንደት ሊወዱት ቻሉ ምክንያትዎን በዝርዝር ያብራሩ?

3. ለስራ አፈጻጸምዎ በአሰሪዎ በቁሳዊም ወይም በቃላት ተበረታተዉ ያውቃሉ ወይ?

ሀ አዉቃለሁ ለ አላዉቅም

ካወቁ ያገኙት የማበረታቻ አይነት ምን ነበር?

4. አሰሪዎ እርሶዎን ያግዘወታል ወይ ? ካገዘዎት በምን መልኩ ነዉ የሚያግዘዎት በዝርዝር ይግለጹ?

5. አሰሪዎ ሁሉንም ሰው በእኩል እና በፍትሃዊነት ያስተናግዳሉ ወይ?

የስራ ተቆጣጣሪዎ እርስዎን እንዴት እንደሚያስተዳድሩ ሰፋ አድርገዉ ይግለጹ?

6.በዉሳኔ አሰጣጥ ሂደቶች ተሳትፈዉ ያዉቃሉ ወይ?

ለዉሳኔ የሚያስፈልጉ ሀሳቦችን/ግብዓቶችን በመስጠት ሂደት ጥሩ ነኝ ብለዉ ያስባሉ ወይ?

7. አጠቃላይ የስራ አፈጻጸምዎ እንዴት ነው?

ክፍል III በሥራ ላይ የአካል ጉዳተኞችን ፍላጎቶች መገምገም

1. መስሪያቤትዎ ለስራዎ አስፈላጊ ቁሳቁሶችን ያሟላል ወይ ?

2. ኮምፒውተርህ/ሽ የJaws መተግበሪያ ተጭኗል ወይ?ሀ. ተጭኗል ____ ለ. አልተጫነም ____

3. በመስሪያቤትዎ የተቀጠረለዎት ረዳት አለ ወይ ? ሀ አለ ____ ለ የለም ____

መልስዎ አዎ ከሆነ ረዳቱ/ቷ በምን መልኩ ነዉ የሚያግዝዎት?

መልስዎ የለኝም ከሆነ ረዳት ያስፈልገዎታል ወይ? ለምንስ ነዉ የሚያስፈልገዎት?

4. ድርጅትዎ ለአካል ጉዳተኞች የግንዛቤ ማስጨበጫ ፕሮግራሞችን ለሰራተኞቹ ይሰጣል ወይ?

5. በእንደዚህ ዓይነት ፕሮግራሞች ውስጥ ተሳትፈህ /ሽ ታውቃለህ/ሽ? መልስዎ አዎ ከሆነ ምን ጠቀመዎት? አብራሪ

ክፍል IV

ስራ በመፈለግ ሂደት የሚያጋጥሙ እንዲሁም በተሰማሩበት ስራ ለማስቀጠል ያለውን የአመለካከት ሁኔታ ለመገምገም የወጡ ጥያቄዎች

1. የስራ ፍለጋ ልምድህን/ሽን ንገረኝ/ሪኝ? ፈተናዎቹ ምን ነበሩ?

2. አሁን እየሰሩበት ያለዉ የስራ መስክ ላይ ለመቀጠር ከተመረቁ በኋላ ምን ያህል ሣምንታት እና ዓመቶች ፈጀብዎት?

ክፍል V

ተቀጣሪ አካል ጉዳተኞች የሚገጥሟቸዉን አካባቢያዊ ተግዳሮቶች መገምገም።

1. በስራ ቦታዎ ላይ የአካባቢን ተደራሽነት በተመለከተ ምን ምን ችግሮች ያጋጥመዎታል? በዝርዝር ያብራሩ?

2. እነዚህን ተግዳሮቶች ከስራ ባልደረቦችዎ፣ ከቅርብ አለቆችዎ ወይም ከሚመለከታቸው አካላት ተነጋግረዉ ያዉቃሉ ወይ?

በስራ ቦታዎ ላይ የሚያጋጥሙዎት አካባቢያዊ መሰናክሎችን ምንምን ናቸዉ?

3. የሚገጥመዎትን የስራ ቦታ ኢ-ተደራሽነት እንዴት አለፉአቸዉ?

ክፍል VI

የአካል ጉዳተኞችን ማህበራዊና ኢኮኖሚያዊ ተግዳሮቶች ላይ ያተኮሩ ጥያቄዎች

1. በመስሪያ ቤትዎ ውስጥ በማህበራዊ እንቅስቃሴዎች ውስጥ በንቃት ይሳተፋሉ? ሀ እሳተፋለሁ ለ አልሳተፍም መልስዎ አልሳተፍም ከሆነ ምክንያቱን ይግለጹ?

2. ከስራ ባልደረቦችዎ እና ከቅርብ አለቆችዎ ጋር ያለዎትን ግንኙነት እንዴት ይገልጹታል?

3. በስራ አካባቢዎ ውስጥ ማህበራዊ ተሳትፎ ለማድረግ የማያስችሉ መሰረታዊ ተግዳሮቶችን ይግለጹ?

4. በሚከፈለዎት ደመወዝ ደስተኛነዎት / ይረካሉ? አብራ/ሪ?

5. በስራዎ ምን ያህል ደስተኛ ነዎት?

6. ከስራዎ ጎን ለጎን ሌላ የገቢ ምንጮች አለዎት?

ለጋራ ዉይይት የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች

1. የመሥሪያ ቤታችሁን ውስጥ ያለውን የስራ ሂደት እንዴት ያዩታል?
2. ሰራተኞቹ ለስራቸው፣ ለሱፐርቪዘሮች እና ለድርጅቱ ያላቸው አመለካከት ምን ይመስላል?
3. የማየት ችግር ያለባቸውን የሰራተኞች የስራ ሁኔታ ለማሻሻል ምን መደረግ አለበት ብለው ያስባሉ?
4. በስራ ቦታዎ ውስጥ የሚያጋጥሙዎት ዋና ዋና ችግሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
5. እነዚህን ተግዳሮቶች ለማሻሻል ምን መደረግ አለበት ብለው ያስባሉ?
6. በሥራ ቦታ የሚያጋጥሟችሁን ችግሮች ለመቋቋም ምን እየሰራችሁ ነው?
7. እናተ የምትሰሩበት መስሪያቤት መዋቅር ምን ያህል ምቹ ነው? አብራራ።

በሴቶችና ማሕበራዊ ጉዳይ ሚኒስትር የአካል ጉዳተኞች ዳይሬክቶሬት የቀረበ የቃለ መጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. በቅጥር ላይ ያሉ አካል ጉዳተኞች ወደ እርስዎ ቢሮ ይዘው የሚመጧቸውን ጉዳዮች ሊነግሩኝ ይችላሉ?
2. ከእነዚህ ሰራተኞች የሚሰሙት ዋና ዋና ቅሬታዎች ምንድን ናቸው?
3. አካል ጉዳተኞችን ቀጥረው ከሚያሰሩ ተቋማት /አሠሪዎች ጋር መስሪያቤትዎ ያለውን ግንኙነት እንዴት ይገልጹታል?

ለክፍለ ከተማ የሰው ሀብት ቢሮዎች የቀረበ የቃለ መጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. ቢሮዎ አካል ጉዳተኞችን በመቅጠር ዙሪያ ያለውን አካታችነት እንዴት ያዩታል?
2. መስሪያ ቤቶችዎ ለአካል ጉዳተኛ ሰራተኞች የሚሰጣቸው ተመጣጣኝ የማመቻቸት ዘዴዎችን በዝርዝር ይነግሩን?
3. የመስሪያቤትዎን የሰው ኃይል መመሪያ ይዘት አካል ጉዳተኞችን ከመደገፍ አንጻር ምን አይነት መመሪያዎች አሉት?

4. ለመስሪያቤቶቻችሁ ሰራተኞች ስለ አካል ጉዳተኝነት ግንዛቤ ለማሳደግ ምን አይነት ስራዎችን እየሰራ ይገኛል?

ለቅርብ አለቆች የቀረበ የቃለ መጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. ከአካል ጉዳተኛ ሰራተኞችዎ ጋር ያላችሁን ግንኙነት ይግለጹ?
2. በእርስዎ እይታ የአካል ጉዳተኛ ሰራተኞችዎ ጥንካሬ እና ድክመቶች ይዘርዝሩ?
3. ለሰራተኞችዎ የስራ ውክልና በምን መልኩ ነዉ የሚሰጡት?

ለተመረጡ አካል ጉዳተኛ ድርጅቶች የቀረበ የቃለ መጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. ለመስሪያቤትዎ ተቀጥረዉ ከሚሰሩ አይነስዉራን ከሚያመጧቸዉ ጉዳዮች መካከል በተደጋጋሚ የሚቀርቡለዎትን በዝርዝር ያብራሩ?
2. ድርጅትዎ በቅጥር ላይ ያሉ አካል ጉዳተኞችን የሚደግፉ እና የሚያዘጋጁ ፕሮጀክቶች፣ ፕሮግራሞች እና ተነሳሽነቶች አሉት ወይ?
3. በእርስዎ እይታ በስራ ላይ ያሉ አይነ ስዉራን የሚያጋጥሟቸዉን ችግሮች ለመፍታት ምን ቢደረግ መልካም ነዉ ብለዉ ያስባሉ?

APPENDIX B. Summary data of the in-depth interview participants

Pseudonyms	Age	Educational status	Year of work experiences	Position	Gender	Gross salary
Y,1	28	BA degree in law	5	Lawyer	F	16,500
Y,2	34	BA degree in Amharic language	7	Culture and Tourism Officer	M	8,705
Y,3	32	BA degree in social Work	11	Women and children professional	F	9,056
Y,4	26	BA degree in Sociology	3	Women and children professional	M	4,150
Y,5	30	BA degree in law	4	Lawyer	M	13,462
Y,6	35	BA degree in Sociology	5	Culture and Tourism Officer	M	6,250
Y,7	26	BA degree in Political sciences and international relation	4	Social Security Professional	F	4,609
Y,8	29	BA in Good governance	5	Women and children professional	M	6,773
Y,9	50	BA degree in Sociology	24	Team Leader	M	10,150

Y,10	36	BA degree in law	8	Prosecutor	F	18,000
Y,11	33	BA degree in History	9	Social Security Professional	F	5,690
Y,12	28	BA in Special need	6	Social safety net professional	M	6,193
Y,13	33	MA degree in social work	4	Project preparation &RM officer	M	7,690
Y,14	40	BA degree in Special need	12	Early child hood monitoring and development professional	M	8,017
Y,15	39	BA degree in Gender	6	Women and children professional	F	6,193