



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

**The Challenges of Blind Graduates during Employment: The case  
of Arada Sub-city, Addis Ababa**

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of Special Needs Education in Partial  
Fulfillment of The Requirements for the Degree of Master's of Arts in Special  
Needs Education**

**By**  
**Fate Tilmo**

**November, 2020**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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## **Acronyms**

FDRE_	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
ENAB_	ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE BLIND
ILO_	International Labor Organization
UNESCO-	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN_	United Nations
WHO-	World Health Organization

## Abstract

*This study explores the challenges of blind graduates encounter in the realm of employment in Arada Sub-city, Addis Ababa. The research also sought to investigate the ways in which the challenges faced by the blind employee in relation to the employment procedures, criteria , employers attitudes, the feelings of blind graduates and sort of remedies to improve the employability of blind graduates. The study employs a qualitative research approach specifically case study research design. Accordingly, the researcher selected seven(7) sample population from each of the groups who participated, living in Arada sub city. (3 male and 5 female) were interviewed using a semi structured interview guide. The researcher has also used focus group discussion (FGD) which involved seven participants, ( three males and four females). In all-purpose, seven individuals took part both in the interview and Focused Group Discussion. Then the data collected was described with relating to the general and specific objectives of the study based on the research questions. The study revealed that the current situation of employment is very problematic and dearth of fair employment for blind graduates due to employers subjective judgment on blind employees competencies, vacancy announcements on News papers are totally in ink only that marginalize blind applicants, shallow employers' knowledge, awareness and reservation to hire blind applicants, absence of braille vacancy announcement for blind applicants, lack of enforceability of international and national legal and administrative instruments for the employability of blind graduates, limitation in human and material resources and assistive devices at the work environment, proclamations, rules and regulations are not placed in private employers, psychological irritations on the side of the blind graduates. However, there are positive measures by government employers that blind graduates are benefited from affirmative action, and employed in few education fields. Based on the conclusions, recommendations are proposed to improve the present practice of employment of blind graduates through awareness creation: Conducive environment should be created by which employers and civil societies established in the name of persons with disabilities would gain better awareness of employment challenges. All employers, the press and other concerned institutions should focus on how job vacancy announcements are prepared in Braille and audio formats in accessible areas near the working areas of the blind and the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind to reduce the challenges and enforcing the existing legal documents. Employers should hire the proper assistant persons in advance as it is a right to the blind to work productively to their utmost potential and it creates job opportunity for the sighted persons. Every necessary equipment should be available without hesitation and delay in the working environment for the blind*

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Citizens of a nation who have successfully accomplished the required knowledge, skills and values in a tertiary level of educational institutions can be taken as human capital of that nation. Such human capital is being considered as the key instrument for development. In this regard, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2016 stated that those countries which have invested much more in the human capital formation can be beneficial in anytime and instances since the major input for development is the availability of skilled manpower. Thus, it is understood as any country, society or which strives to build its human capital on the basis of quantitative and qualitative knowhow and perception would become strong enough to attain any type of visions.

Meanwhile, human capital formation has various costs that are directed to both the society as well as the individual who undergoes the training or education. Accordingly, in educating an individual or groups of individuals, a nation would have to spend a lot. In this regard, Doice (2014) explained that to form and accumulate human capital through education of citizens, a country will have to be ready for paying costs both at the national and individual levels. On the other hand, after providing necessary training and education as well as forming the human capital, societies could afford not to use the skill, knowledge and value of all skilled manpower's. However, such a phenomenon is abundantly observed in various societies because of a variety of reasons. There is a weak link between education and employment, and that unemployment is massive even within the skilled man power. Particularly individuals with disabilities in low-

income countries face severe challenges with regards to participating in the work force and finding employment on equal terms as non-disabled persons after even graduating from higher education institutions.

From the Ethiopian perspective, graduates with disabilities tend to face serious barriers in the labor market and a risk of unemployment. It is stated that, there are fragmented evidences showing that higher institutions graduates with visual disabilities do not have equal access to jobs, despite having the required qualifications due to attitudinal and other related factors. The situation seems even worse to female graduates with disabilities than male graduates with visual impairments.

Therefore, this study systematically explores the nature and extent of employment barriers and reflects the way forward to improve the employability of graduates who are blind. The study also attempts to explore issues on the process and procedures of employment, nature of the challenges, and conditions of their working environment which blind persons are encountering in finding employment after the completion of their higher education studies. Furthermore, the study identifies areas of suggestions to improve the employability of blind persons in Arada Sub-city.

The study is conducted in Arada sub-city Addis Ababa City administration of the selected research site. The participants are Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation in Arada Sub-City, Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and Blind graduates.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Blindness is a condition that occurs starting from birthday or afterwards on a person. Hence, blindness has been defined by World Health Organization (WHO) (2001) as a complete inability

of an individual to use one's eyes and communicate with the outside world because of total loss of the sight sense. Therefore, when an individual is termed as blind, it means that person cannot use his/her eyes to communicate with others through them. However, whenever a person loses sight and becomes blind, he/she can be aided with various methods and equipment and so be able to be an individual who can perform activities equal or more effectively than others. That is why UNESCO(2012) noted that modernity and use of improved technological outputs for any level of disability comprising blindness, anyone can be trained, educated or learn different types of professional competencies that are goal oriented as well bring income to an individual as an occupation.

Similarly, as of providing training and education for people with physical or mental disabilities including blind persons, nations have different exercises and statutes. In this regard as of the level of accessibility, relevance and equitability of educational service provision Zinabie (2017) described that developed countries have achieved near to perfect equilibrium with that of all people without discrimination. Therefore, the most developed nations have been able to provide equal, accessible and relevant training and educational service. As a result, it can be deduced that a person with blindness in the above mentioned countries have become an important work force or skilled manpower for the community development activities of a nation.

Meanwhile, blind individuals who do have some kind of training or education in tertiary educational institutions could experience different levels of prospects or problems in the work world. As of having opportunities for educated blind people Bell & Mino (2015) put that the developed nations have been affording engagement and recruit blind person with the required educational qualification on occupations which comprise of teaching, lawyers, attorney, judge, translator of one to another language, journalism, musician, poet, novelist. Thus, persons with

blindness who do complete their higher education can earn a living by engaging on their choice of profession.

On the contrary, the same blind individuals may face various challenges to employment in different parts of the world. In this regard, Taylor & Gay (2010) have listed some of the obstacles based on the findings of their study; it was noted as having tough competitions on their field of job position, backward attitude of the society and particularly potential employers to recruit person with blindness, lack of needed materials and also equipment for blind person being employed in the organization, presence of poor infrastructure that hinders mobility of blind person from place to place as well as inside the work environment, high chance of discouragement of employed blind person and the resulting in high turnover.

Similarly, in the Ethiopian context employment of blind persons after graduation has been facing challenges. Consequently, Zinabie (2017) concluded in her study that wastage of scarce resources has been evident which sprung out of provision of training and education for persons with disabilities including those who are blind. With that, there could have been discouragement of educated person who are blind, their parents, as well as the society that paid taxes for educational service provision.

These citizens are excluded from most walks of life in all sectors including employment and education. Misconceptions about disabilities combined with lack of knowledge about the potentials of persons with disabilities has contributed a lot to the limitation of this employment (Tirussew, 2005), and women with disabilities are at a further disadvantage because of gender role stereotyping which leads to double discrimination.

According to the practical observation and experience of the student researcher of this study, the following basic issues such as the way the vacancy announcement takes place, how the job application criteria are set and employee recruitment procedures are carried out, and other related things has initiated to carry out this research. As obviously observed a number of institutes are reluctant to employ blind applicants. As parts of the society, the blind graduates apply for a vacancy announced. However, the concerned institutions reflect their reluctance in various ways. They also intend to take negative measures towards the blind persons. One of this is extending the time of examination and sometimes totally canceling it to benefit others. In addition, these institutions post the job announcements only through printed materials by clearly discriminating the blind person. This reveals as if they are looking only for cited persons. With regard to application criteria, it is common to see changing the results of the competent after knowing them; otherwise they attempt to convince the blind applicant that he or she does not fit to the position for it will have tiresome tasks. Moreover, they identify the financial shortage and the uncomfortable situations in their office for person who is blind to escape from expense and responsibility. Another serious problem emanates from the attitude of some of the blind graduate themselves who would be the future employees. This group undermines itself in that he or she might not be needed for the position based on prior experience of their friends' fate and their batches. Accordingly this group expects negative response from the employers. Another point which is an inspiration for conducting this study is the applicability of the written rules and policies. A lot of proclamations talk about the employment conditions of visually impaired persons. But none of them are applied without accusation and documental presentation for conformation. With regard to the policy, the government itself does not have strong stand on the privileges of the blind individuals and for the application of the rules, proclamations and every

legal condition. Therefore, this and other issues hinder the blind persons from being employed in governmental and nongovernmental institutions.

Therefore, having noticed the challenges which have not been addressed by previous studies in Arada Sub-city, Addis Ababa, this study systematically and deeply investigates employment challenges and opportunities faced by blind persons after graduation from higher educational institutions.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

#### **1.3.1 Main question:**

What are the major employment challenges that blind individuals face after graduation in Arada sub-city?

#### **1.3.2 Specific questions:**

1. What sorts of challenges do blind graduates face during employment?
2. What is the attitude of the employers towards the blind graduates?
3. What is the feeling of the blind persons about the problem of employment and employers?
4. What should be done to improve the employability of blind graduates?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 General objective**

The general objective of this study is to explore the challenges that blind graduates encounter in the course employment.



### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To assess major employment challenges that the blind graduates encounter.
2. To explore the attitude of the employers towards the blind applicants.
3. To examine the feelings of the blind graduates about the problem of their employment.
4. To assess how far the technology is accessible for blind applicants to follow the announcements.
5. To identify areas of intervention to improve the employability of blind graduates in Arada Sub- city.

### **1.5 The significance of the study**

This study is aimed at highlighting the major challenges which blind persons are encountering in finding employment after the completion of their higher education studies in Arada Sub-city Addis Ababa City Administration in Ethiopia. Accordingly, first and foremost; the research findings may bring out clearly the challenges of employment conditions for blind persons in the study area. It also attempts to provide suggestions to improve the employability of blind graduates in the country. Finally, the study may contribute information and also open possibilities for further research in the area.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

There are a lot of persons with different disability types in Addis Ababa. However, due to various factors like time, energy and financial shortage, it is not affordable to include all of them under the study. It is expected that the goal of someone after completion of higher education is engaging on a job according to the field of study he or she learned. However, some community groups lack this opportunity. Rather they face difficulties in passing the exams of various organizations due to societal attitude towards persons with disabilities applicants. One of such victims are blind

individuals. Therefore, this study particularly focuses on blind graduates who are members of Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and those who have the experience of facing the challenges to obtain employment in Arada Sub city. The study is delimited to Arada Sub-city, Addis Ababa.

## **Chapter two**

### **2. Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Overview**

This section explores a range of literature on employment situation of persons with visual impairment. The literature focuses on employment among people who are visually impaired, the challenges that people who are visually impaired encountered, and types of challenges and accommodations needed for them to become successful. International legislation related to employment of persons with disabilities and Ethiopian legislations are addressed. Lastly, a summary of the reviews conducted are made.

#### **2.2 Visual Impairment and Employment**

Johnson (1998) stated that individuals with visual impairments can successfully perform a wide variety of job functions and be productive employees despite the challenges and barriers to be overcome. It has been well documented that working age individuals with visual impairments have lagged behind in workforce participation when compared to their non-visually impaired counterparts (Chappell & Cooke, 2010). For example a major national data collection survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, estimated that 37% of non-institutionalized individuals aged 18-64 with a visual impairment were employed in 2012. This compares to a 70% employment rate for non-institutionalized individuals aged 18-64 without a visual impairment (Erickson et al., 2009 cited in Chappell & Cooke, 2010).

Key success factors identified in previous studies of employment for individuals with visual impairments include (a) knowledge and understanding of accommodations and assistive

technology, (b) opportunities on the job training or other work experiences with an employer, and (c) co-worker involvement (Chappell & Cooke, 2010). Rehabilitation professionals can also work with employers to develop strategies for accommodating workers with visual impairments, help them understand and meet their legal obligations under the ADA, and jointly resolve disability related issues (Rumrill & Scheff, 1997 cited in O'Day, 1999).

Another approach for visually impaired individuals seeking employment opportunities is to utilize vocational rehabilitation agencies. Utilizing vocational rehabilitation services has been shown as an effective strategy for employment of individuals with visual impairments, although completing a vocational rehabilitation program does not necessarily assure paid employment.

Various individual characteristics and demographic factors also have a major impact on employment rates (Chappell & Cooke, 2010). Studies have shown the demographic factors of age, gender, and races are associated with workforce participation rates for individuals with visual impairments (Cavanaugh & Rogers, 2002). When considering age, one study concluded that individuals with severe visual impairments ages 18-54 were over 5 times more likely to be employed than those aged 55-69 (Kirchner, Schmeidler & Todorov, 1999). Regarding gender, being male has been positively associated with higher employment rates for individuals with visual impairments in multiple research studies (Cavanaugh & Rogers, 2002).

Studies have defined successful employment differently. The Kirchner, Schmeidler and Todorov (1999) study only included competitive employment in their definition. However, Cavanaugh and Rogers (2002) used a combination of competitive employment, sheltered or supported employment, and unpaid homemakers to define successful employment. Because there are

fundamental differences of each subcategory of employment, treating all the subcategories as one group diminishes the value and comparability of the research results.

### **2.3 Barriers to gainful employment**

People who are visually impaired may face a number of barriers in their efforts to make the transition from school to employment and community life. At a societal level, governmental policies can create financial disincentives to engage in paid employment, such as limiting the number of hours a recipient of disability benefits can work and retracting medical benefits when a person finds work (Shaw, Gold & Wolffe, 2007).

Furthermore, employers are often hesitant to hire people who are visually impaired (Crudden et al. 1998). According to Wolffe and Candela (2002), employers are concerned about the perceived expenses that are associated with workplace accommodations, delays that workers who are visually impaired may experience in reaching full productivity, and potential difficulties in terminating a worker who is disabled whose performance is not acceptable. Wolffe and Candela found that employers who have had some experience with hiring individuals with disabilities are far more likely to recruit persons with disabilities in the future

Demographic and psychosocial factors have also been found to affect opportunities for employment (Shaw, Gold & Wolffe, 2007). Psychosocial factors may include the motivation to work, the development of skills, self-efficacy, self-esteem, social support, and the availability of social networks (Crudden, A. et al., 1999). Demographic factors may include sex, age, race, educational level, health status, location of residence, and socioeconomic status (Kirchner, Schmeidler, & Todorov, 1999). Although such factors can affect anyone's opportunities for employment, they may have a more profound impact on those with

disabilities. For example, living in an area in which transportation stops are distant or transportation is infrequent or not available may limit employment options for those who do not drive (Shaw, Gold & Wolffe, 2007).

Wolffe and Sacks (1997) explored the vocational experiences of students in a study that examined the academic, daily living, social, and vocational lifestyle domains of youths with visual impairments and compared these lifestyles to those of sighted youths. These domains were identified as areas of need for youths who are visually impaired to make successful transitions to adulthood and the items were designed to explore how youths (aged 15-21) spent their time in comparison to sighted youths. Within the vocational domain, Wolffe and Sacks (1997) found that the type and nature of employment was much narrower for students who were visually impaired than for those who were sighted.

Besides the demographic factors of age and gender, employer refusal to provide appropriate accommodations can be additional obstacles to gainful employment. Failure to provide appropriate workplace supports or accommodations can be considered a workplace barrier (Johnson, 1998). Employer misconceptions even limit job opportunities for people with disabilities who obtain advanced educational degrees in the sciences (Woods, 1996 cited in (Crudden, A. et al., 1999). Unwarranted safety concerns prevent adequate opportunity for these individuals, even though workers with disabilities have safety records that mirror their non-disabled counterparts.

Moreover, limited expectations, stereotypes, and misunderstandings are also common workplace barriers to successful employment for individuals with visual impairments. Workplace barriers may prevent individuals with visual impairments from performing functions they could

otherwise complete and also could be considered discrimination from the perspective of the employee (Cavanaugh & Rogers, 2002).

Salomone and Paige (1984 cited in Johnson, 1998) researched barriers to employment from the view of consumers with visual disabilities who were not successful in retaining competitive employment. The most common barrier identified by participants was lack of knowledge among the general public about the scope and variety of mental and physical capabilities of persons with visual impairments. Other issues identified by consumers included the following areas:

(a) Lack of successful personal and vocational experiences contributing to a positive self-concept among persons who are blind or visually impaired.

(b) Employer resistance to hiring persons with disabilities.

(c) Transportation difficulties, and

(d) Insufficient vocational training and career planning experience. Secondary considerations included the state of the economy, educators' insensitivities to the needs of students with visual impairments, lack of successful role models who are visually impaired, lack of information about recreational opportunities and consumer awareness groups, unfamiliarity with vocational potential, attitudes of rehabilitation service providers, and inadequate numbers of rehabilitation service providers.

College graduates with visual impairments who successfully obtained employment identified the following problems during their transition from school to the workforce:

(a) locating transportation.

(b) accessing signs, diagrams and charts in the workplace.

(c) discrimination due to their visual impairment.

(d) Difficulty accessing computers.

(e) Inadequate time management skills.

(f) Lack of opportunities for participating in recreational or athletic activities, and

(g) Feelings of loneliness (McBroom, 1995 cited in Crudden, A. et al., 1999). Employees indicated a general feeling of being unprepared for the demands of work and needing additional training and information

## **2.4 Employment Processes and work Environment**

The most frequently reported challenges faced in course of employment by persons with disabilities include; (inaccessible working offices, buildings, employers' unfavorable attitudes towards persons with disabilities, vacancies and employment rules exclude persons with disabilities, the need to disclose disability before employment, lack of information about vacancies, employers' lack of awareness regarding the rights of persons with disabilities for employment (Feruz,2006).

Graduates with visual impairment, for example, face difficulties to find jobs although they have equal required qualifications with their sighted counterparts for (Keralem,2006). It is reported that as either they had been screened out before approaching for tests or denied the opportunity to be hired after they passed the entrance tests. In fact, some are seen when working on streets peddling, it was further noted that the private sector has totally ignored the employment opportunity of persons with disabilities.



As to the working environment for PwDs, reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities can range from simple to complex and cheap to expensive. Accommodations allow the worker with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the job and hence depend on the worker's disability and its effect on performance of essential job functions. Accommodations may include providing written, step-by-step instructions for job tasks; flexible work and leave schedules; rearrangement of work stations for accessibility; alternative key boards, voice recognition software, and mobility or ergonomic assistive devices (Wonacott, 2003).

Employed persons with disabilities face discrimination at work place. In a study conducted by Keralem (2006) and Melanesia (2001) in some selected organizations in Addis Ababa, persons with visual impairments complained about discrimination in their job promotion even after they have secured the job. According to Mindahun (2006), study participants indicated unavailability of special necessary materials and equipments in work places for persons with disabilities in general and for persons with visual or physical impairments in particular. Braille materials are not provided for the blind at work places partly because it is not easy to find these materials in the market and partly because of ignorance or negligence of employers. As the discussants also raised, buildings are not constructed considering persons with physical disability, and as a result, any locations where they need to go to get services in general, and work sites in particular are inaccessible for them. They also pointed out that hiring readers for the blind is being encouraged by the government, however, there are some employers who looked at this as extra expense for their agencies or resisted hiring persons with disabilities. In order to avoid additional expenses they reject candidates with visual and other impairments for employment.

Notices are posted on boards through ink, which the blind workers do not read unless their colleagues tell them. There is no any other arrangement in any of the agencies, where

respondents of this research work, to enable workers with visual impairments see available notices. In fact, all of them reported, they lost no opportunities because of the inaccessibility of the posted notices.

## **2.5 Employers' Attitude toward Persons with Disabilities**

Employers play a critical role in addressing the high unemployment rate experienced by persons with disabilities. A number of researchers have identified employer attitudes toward persons with disabilities as an important factor in the staggering unemployment rate of persons with disabilities (Blanck, 1998; King, 1993; Smith, 1992). Although employers' attitudes toward individuals with disabilities have been studied extensively, the research has produced inconsistent findings. Some factors identified as positive attributes by some employers (e.g., attendance, safety, productivity) have been cited as concerns by employers in other studies (Nietupski, HamreNietupski, VanderHart, & Fishback, 1996).

According to Kassahun (2000), one obvious cause for low employment of persons with disabilities is discouraging attitude of the society. According to him, Ethiopians are known for their sympathy (i.e. feeling of sorrow) for persons with disabilities. This is, however, has never proved to bring about an overall independence of for the persons with disabilities. It has rather caused each individual to develop undesirable dependency and helplessness. Such feeling seems to have lessened the number of people with disabilities from the field of employment. Prejudice is even reflected in the minds of the teachers and instructors at various formal educational institutions.

## **2.6 Technology Issues**

In a discussion of the impact of technology on skill formation and career development of persons with visual impairments and blindness,( Mather, 1994 cited in Crudden et al., 1999) related that some workers found their career paths shaped by the technology provided by their employers. He advocated that rather than relying on adaptive technology, methods be devised so that persons with visual impairments can access standard equipment with as little modification as possible. The development of socialization and communication skills of workers with visual impairments was emphasized. Mather stated that socialization and training opportunities are vital to maintaining technological equity.

Wakefield (1995 cited in Crudden et al., 1999) maintained that while technology has come a very long way and has made it possible for the blind and visually impaired to be competitive employees; there are many road blocks to still overcome for equality in the workplace. Even with all the new advances in technology and software development today, blind or visually impaired professionals are still encountering barriers with their ability to carry out their job duties. For example, the idea of providing PDF file attachments so that anyone, regardless of the platform being used should be able to open the file can sometimes be an issue for some of them that use screen readers or screen magnification tools.

Strechay (2011) also repeated these concerns, but maintained that the issue of providing additional training for persons with visual impairments utilizing the digital environment is a significant step to minimize barrier to computer use. Additionally, the greater time required for a person with a visual impairment to access the digital environment compared to a sighted peer has not been addressed.

According to Huffman and Strechay (2010) put another on-the-job issue related to technology is that a lack of quality interaction and support with Information Technology (IT). While the IT staff is able to maintain and support staff using the general issued computers and software, they often don't have the knowledge or experience to install, configure and maintain the adaptive technology. If the IT specialist installs the specialized adaptive software, many times they do not install it correctly causing the program to fail to operate properly or at all due to the lack of the resource requirements needed for the software to run efficiently because applications of access packages are version specific (Strechay, 2010).

## **2.7 Legislation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities**

UN (1994) has stated the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. Thus, rule 7(1) states that laws and regulations in the employment field must not discriminate against persons with disabilities and must not raise obstacles to their employment. Moreover, Rule 7(2) has stated that states should actively support the integration of persons with disabilities into open employment. This active support could occur through a variety of measures, such as vocational training, incentive-oriented quota schemes, reserved or designated employment, loans or grants for small business, exclusive contracts or priority production rights, tax concessions, contract compliance or other technical or financial assistance to enterprises employing workers with disabilities. States should also encourage employers to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate persons with disabilities (Zinabie, 2017).

Furthermore, IDF (1998 cited in Zinabie, 2017) convention 159 and recommendation 168 of the International Labor office (ILO) set standards for vocational rehabilitation and the integration of persons with disabilities into the integration of persons with disabilities into the work place. Many countries have long established regulatory approaches-setting standards, quotas and

systems for support. More recently, others have introduced similar legislation as part of national efforts to implement the UN standard Rules. The reality, however, is that the majority of people with disabilities are denied the chance of regular, productive work and that, for women the situation is particularly difficult.

ILO (1994) considering that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work to protection against unemployment. Thus, in order to combat discrimination against people with disabilities in training and employment, several measures have been taken (ILO, 1992) and these are reflected in a number of policies, conventions, declarations and resolutions. UNESCO (1996) also reported that legislation is needed to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to equal rights and opportunities and further help in securing the resources needed to translate abstract rights into practical entitlements.

## **2.8 Legislation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Ethiopia**

National legislation states embodying the rights and obligations of citizens, should include the rights and obligations of persons with disabilities. States are under an obligation to enable persons with disabilities to exercise their rights, including their human, civil and political rights, on an equal basis with other citizens. States must ensure that organizations of persons with disabilities are involved in the development of persons with in the same way, even though it is not yet applied practically, the Ethiopian Federation of Persons with Disabilities (2000) theoretically adopted the above ideas.

The Government of Ethiopia has developed a number of legislations and ratified many international conventions pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities. For instance, the Constitution of the Federal Democratic of Ethiopia (1995) in its Article 41(5) sets out the

States' responsibility for the provisions of necessary rehabilitation and support services for people with disabilities. The country's Proclamation concerning the Rights to employment for persons with disabilities (No.568/2008) makes null and void any law, practice, custom, attitude and other discriminatory situations that limit equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. This proclamation also requires employers to provide appropriate working and training conditions; take all reasonable accommodation measure and affirmative action's, particularly when employing women with disabilities and assign an assistant to enable a person with disability to perform their work or follow training. The Federal Civil Servant Proclamation (515/2007) provides for special preference in the recruitment, promotion and deployment of qualified candidates with disabilities. Developmental Social Welfare Policy (1997) specifically targets people with disabilities and sets out to safe guard their rights and to promote opportunities for vocational rehabilitation.

Moreover, the National Program of Action for Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (1999) aims to enable persons with disabilities and promote a better standard of living by building their capacity and ensuring their equal rights and full participation in society. These all are few examples. In reality, however, these are not yet all put in practice on the ground. There is a lot to be done, to enforce and facilitate the implementation process. For many graduates with disabilities either there is no possibility of finding a job or the work they are able to obtain is usually menial with appropriate training (ILO, 1998). For instance, some findings indicate that many people with visual impairment encounter discrimination as they attempt both to acquire and retain jobs. It has been further found that the blind and the physically impaired students have been discriminated during application and competition for jobs. What is more, some have been excluded from training and promotion (Mindahun, 2007).

O'Day (1999) states, besides stipulating the rights and duties of citizens, legislation are a means to avoid discrimination, to protect human rights. However, like some of the countries in the world legislation to protect the rights of the people with disabilities, are scarce in Ethiopia (Aderie, 2002). Thus, the exclusion of people with disabilities from medical, educational, recreational, employment possibilities as well as other social services is a violation of the basic human right of persons with disabilities. For instance, the exclusion of persons with disabilities from employment, irrespective of his/her potential is based on the deep- rooted social bias (Tirussew, 1993).

However, the proclamation No. 101 /1994 states the right of persons with disabilities to employment. This law abandoned any kind of discrimination based on disability in the area of employment. The law provides that any person with disabilities has the right to compete and be selected for any vacancy and training unless the nature of the work demands otherwise; selection criteria shall not be based on the disability of the candidate; the law states that there will reservation of certain jobs for persons with disabilities; persons with disabilities have the right to get the salary and benefits pertinent to the job they are doing; persons with disabilities have the right to get the necessary materials and equipment to perform the job (Negarit Gazeta, No. 101/1994). Therefore, it is an indication of good changes for people with disabilities. Furthermore, according to the proclamation No. 1/1995(8) Women shall have a right to equality in employment, promotion, pay and the transfer of pension entitlements (Negarit Gazeta. No.1/1995).

In addition, MOLSA (1996) has formulated certain kinds of policy about women. One of the policies is all effort shall be made to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in respect to access to technical training, formal sector employment, working conditions, access to

health care services and to protect them from all social and cultural pressures to which they are subjected on account of their sex.

In summary, individuals who have a visual impairment have an education level comparable to that of the general population, they are proportionally much less likely to be employed. Clearly there are many barriers to employment of people who are blind or visually impaired. There is a general consensus that overcoming these barriers would lead to equal employment opportunities. A number of personal and environmental factors are associated with work participation. Research indicated that common barriers include the following: (a) transportation, (b) skills and education, (c) employer attitudes, and (d) government-sponsored work disincentives. Access to adequate IT training and improved work place support service need to be addressed. There are, however, many more barriers that prevent this population from working to their full potential



## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Methods**

This study is carried out to explore the employment challenges that are faced by blind persons after their graduation in Arada sub city, Addis Ababa. Under this section the research design, participant selection, research instruments to be used, data analysis techniques are described below.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In order to be able to investigate the challenges of employment for persons who are blind upon graduation from higher educational institutions, the study employs a qualitative research design specifically case study research design was used. The qualitative research approach is more appropriate to investigate the research questions in depth. Qualitative research approach considers collecting information from the participants in order to understand the phenomenon under the study from the perspectives of those involved in the research (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). This study wanted, therefore, to use this approach, in order to have a detailed account of blind persons' own perspectives about the challenges facing in job market, and the challenges these persons are facing from the perspectives of stakeholders such as employers and government institutions responsible to assist the employability of blind persons. Moreover, qualitative approach is considered relevant due to its nature of providing data from the respondents in the natural settings (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010).

### **3.2 Study Area**

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa Administration City, Arada sub-city. This research site was purposefully selected because of the availability of Office of Advocacy and Community-based Participation and the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind where Blind graduates were easily accessible.

### **3.3 Participants of the Study**

The participants of the study were Blind graduates who graduated with first degree three or four years back and unemployed until now. The researcher selected 7 participants where by 3 were males and 4 were females from a total of 20 unemployed graduates.

### **3.4. Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the case study. Purposive sampling attempts to select the respondents based on the certain characteristics or criteria (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). Purposive sampling is a common type of population sampling in qualitative studies, as it helps to obtain rich and relevant information for the study from individuals or respondents (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). Accordingly, the researcher selected seven (7) samples living in Arada sub city, Addis Ababa and the head of the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation and Ethiopian National Association of the Blind.

The target group is also chosen because of the following reasons. (1) Many of them are vulnerable to the challenges after completion of their higher education. (2) They are easily accessible to give information as they reside around the project site. (3) It is believed that they are usually available for information since they live in the same site and near there.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

For this qualitative study two data collection tools are employed, including participant interviews and focus group discussion. The resulting information creates a triangulation or convergence of sources (Creswell, 2007).

### **3.5.1 Interviews**

The most significant sources of information for this study are semi-structured individual interview with each of the study participants. Seven blind respondents from selected institutes who have direct life experience replied to the interview questions. The interview is arranged to accommodate the participants' schedules and is conducted in locations selected by each participant. Each interview takes 40-60 minutes, depending on participant responses. The data that was collected from the participants was recorded using a digital voice recorder which was later on transcribed for data analysis.

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion**

Focus Group Discussion can be considered a dialogue on a specific topic with a small group of individuals (Creswell, 2007). This allows the researcher to obtain high quality data in the context of the research area. Due to the small number of participants, this data collection method was limited to seven discussants in one focus group discussion. Like the semi-structured interview schedule, a digital voice recorder was used to obtain transcription of the discussion for the purpose of later analysis.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

After the required data was carefully collected, the data analysis is done following the steps of qualitative data analysis procedures. First, when the process of data collection is over; raw data is transcribed from audio recording into texts. Then these data were transcribed and translated from Amharic Language to the English language. Afterwards, transcriptions from each interview and focus group discussion data were analyzed in relation to the basic research questions are presented in relation to the research questions. Finally, the field data were interpreted, analyzed and discussed in light of the research questions.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

Prior to administration of the research instruments, the selected participants were briefed about the purpose of the study, about the anonymity of the instruments and about confidentiality of their opinions. Participants' consent was obtained and their voluntary participation in the study was also appreciated.

## **Chapter four**

### **4. Findings**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This study was conducted to explore the challenges blind graduates encounter during the courses of employment. This section presents the findings of the study. The findings are organized and discussed in line with the objectives of the research and each of the five research questions. The results were made based on the data obtained through semi-structured interview. A total of seven individuals participated in the interview; male 3 and female 4. The interview includes participants from Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, Office of Advocacy and Community-based Participation of Arada Sub-City, Ethiopian National Association of the Blind.

In relation to their educational status, all of the interviewees are degree holders. Four of the participants have a work experience ranging from two up to eighteen years and three of them are not yet employed. Their age ranges from 23 to 31. Four of the respondents are unmarried while 3 of them have concluded marriage.

Side by side, a Focused Group Discussion was held among seven discussants (male 3 and female 4) to generate data and insights into shared opinions and experiences that could not have been addressed fully through the interview.

#### **4.2. Findings of the study**

The following section reveals the findings of the study based on data obtained through multiple participant response from interview questions as well as focused group discussion questions. The discussion in both cases centered on the challenges of blind graduates, employment conditions

and reflections on the way further. The interview questions produced qualitative data while the focused group discussion questions served as gap filling data for questions that may not have been sufficiently collected through the interview data. So both interview and focus group discussion have been utilized to generate qualitative data.

#### **4.2.1. Interview Result**

##### **4.2.1.1 Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs**

Participants from Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs were asked to state what they understood about the existing employment opportunities for blind graduates in Addis Ababa in general and Arada Sub-city in particular. They revealed that they understood theoretically that there are equal job opportunities for blind and non- blind- graduates in the fields of their educational studies. However, most job opportunities are social science fields notably in teaching fields of different disciplines like language and literature, history and Cultural heritages, law and governance studies, sociology, special needs education. From the interview, it seems that the respondents from Addis Ababa bureau of labor and social affairs do not know exactly what specific and practical opportunities are available in the research site for they put their general point of view.

##### **4.2.1.1.2. Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation**

On the other hand, the interviewed officers from Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation in Arada sub-city revealed that the only potential employment chance for blind graduates is the very policy of affirmative action. To this circumstance, the officers disclosed that candidate blind applicants are privileged in that four additional points would be added on their final results to the actual scores than their non-blind counterparts. This means if both the blind and the sighted candidates score the same points, priority is given to the blind applicants by

adding four extra points. Other than this, they stated that other issues of employment standards are equally provided for all applicants in the same manner of rules and would be strictly implemented. At this explanation, it is clear that there is some gap of understanding on the part of Workers Associations Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities in Arada sub-city as to whether affirmative action is really a chance practically or a mere promise that was not certain.

#### **4.2.1.1.3. Ethiopian National Association of the Blind**

Respondents from the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind revealed the following:  
*“The current situation of employment opportunity is not totally absent or at zero level for blind graduates. This is because it is possible to see few employed blind individuals in different institutions. In fact, the chance to be employed comfortably is very difficult. The opportunity of being employed in the city of Addis Ababa is becoming more difficult in these days since all graduates are concentrated here. What is more, it is unthinkable to get a job for the blind graduates in the private sector. It is totally absent. The employers have no good understanding with regards the disability issues. They look inheriting the backward believe of the society to a certain extent and education might have not brought help to overcome it.”*

#### **4.2.1.1.4. Blind Graduates**

Participant blind graduates were also asked in the interview whether there are employment possibilities in their respective fields at the sub-city. Most of them answered that there are no properly identified chances of employment spaces in their respective fields of study. On the other hand, two of them replied that there are employment opportunities for blind graduates in the area of education fields. They revealed that following their graduation the government assigns those who are graduated in the area of education in the different regions of the country. Though that is the case, they stated, it is very difficult for them to go for the job in different parts

of the country because there are no accessible infrastructures in the work environment. And even beyond that, it is serious to manage life where basic necessities like water and social needs are not available.

In this case one of the blind participant states the following:

*“I have the information that there are many blind graduates without job in the sub-city and Addis Ababa as a whole. When I talked them they stated that it has become difficult for them to find job relating with their educational background. A fact should not be denied. We blind persons get employment after many ups and downs in urban area; that in turn insists on to make effort to find job in towns and cities.”*

The general picture of the interview made with the graduates discloses that the current opportunity of employment in Arada Sub-city is limited, as a chance, to assignment of candidates in the area of education. This signifies that there are no real and fair employment opportunities for most blind graduates. Affirmative action rarely works in the government institutions. The chance to be employed is by far very narrow for blind graduates requesting for a lot of sacrifice in the process.

#### **4.2.1.2. Challenges that Blind Graduates Encounter during Employment**

The following section presents findings on the challenges blind graduates face during employment. It discusses the information and ideas obtained from the interviewed participants.

##### **4.2.1.2.1. Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs**

Participants from Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs were asked what they felt with regards the major hindrances to employ blind graduates. They tried to identify the following problems.



*“The general outlook of the societies in the working environment is more or less unpleasant. They do not have a harmonized approach towards blind job-seeking individuals. On the other hand, employers give their personal justification. Other than these, they believe that working institutions are not yet conducive for blind persons to be hired to work properly and effectively. They perceive that things are not accessible for blind persons. As a result of these constraints, they believe that blind individuals are not competent and may not be effectively productive even if they have been given the opportunities to work.”*

#### **4.2.1.2.2. Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City**

Participants from the Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-city who were interviewed about the problems, in the course of employment for blind graduates, identified two things. They stated attitude of employers and inaccessibility of job vacancy announcements as the most important problems.

#### **4.2.1.2.3. Blind Graduates**

Then again, participant blind graduates stated that one of the major problems to employ blind persons is the common fact that the employers are with subjective judgment on disability. They put that employers’ disregard for the competence of the blind is the main problem in the employment process. According to the belief of the participants, the employers are not entirely unaware about the potentials of the blind. But the heartbreaking is that they are negligent towards the persons with disabilities at all.

### **4.2.1.3. Job Vacancies Criteria**

#### **4.2.1.3.1. Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City**

The interviewees who came from Arada sub-city and have the mandate to announce job vacancies replied that they have the same criteria of job application for all candidates. They insist that the civil service manual that regulates the application procedure is the same for all. There are no different and specific documents to be applied for blind applicants. They have not set different standards for blind applicants throughout their employment precedent cases.

#### **4.2.1.3.2. Blind Graduates**

Blind participants reflected different views about vacancy announcements. The blind graduates, with the exception of those who are assigned by the government, said that they write for job vacancies posted following the requirements set by the employers. In some instances, blind applicants are required to submit the summary of their CV and application written only in ink. They all said that those practices are very inconvenient for blind applicants. Blind applicants can read and apply only in Braille. Other vacancy announcements require additional skills which are not related with the employment position. Interestingly enough, two of them put the practical instances they faced during their application. The vacant post announced for lawyers and sociologists demands the candidates to come with driving license. In addition, other Blind participants told that some vacancy announcements required them to have a good hand writing as a precondition. The interviewees conclusively reported that these kinds of criteria are unfair and unreasonable which discriminate and limit the blind candidates from the employment sphere. All employers are focusing on the job and do not pay a due consideration for persons who could not write in ink and unable to drive vehicles.

#### **4.2.1.4. Types of Job Vacancies and the Employment of Blind Applicants**

##### **4.2.1.4.1. Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City**

Participants from Arada sub-city who are responsible to publicize vacancies reflected the following views about vacancy announcements:

They stated that there are procedures of job vacancy announcement as prescribed by Addis Ababa City Administration government Worker Employment Proclamation No. 2000. It is stated in the proclamation that any job vacancy announcement that requires diploma and above educational qualification should be announced on Newspapers that have regular public accessibility and other available electronic media. Those below diploma levels of educational qualifications job vacancy announcements are ruled by internal rules and by posting it around in a few public areas notice board. Moreover, there are written procedures that contain particulars of minimum job vacancy posts requirements for all vacant positions for both educational qualifications (Diploma and above and less than diploma).

##### **4.2.1.4.2. Ethiopian National Association of the Blind**

Those participants who came from the Ethiopian National Association of the blind (ENAB) were asked to comment on the accessibility of job vacancy announcements. Both of them responded that the announcements are difficult for them to find. For instance, job vacancies posted on a noticeboard are located in very limited and sparse areas, very commonly around Arat Kilo, Mexico and Legehar areas. These areas are highly crowded where blind persons could not reach without the help of sighted persons. The participants revealed that even if they got support from other people to arrive at the notice board, some important part of the vacancy requirements might be left unnoticed by the reader. This in turn instigates disappointment either on the manner they were treated by the person who gave them support with incomplete information. They said that

this would be worse when they face it repeatedly. This is because it makes them to have psychological irritation.

#### **4.2.1.4.3. Blind Graduates**

With Regard to job vacancies announced on the public News papers, participant blind graduates described it to be better than those posted on the notice board. The justification to the preference is their readability with the help of persons at the site or at home if there is someone who could read for them. The participants stated that they would be exposed to extra financial costs in both cases as this might be repeated for many times. This again causes emotional disturbance.

On the other hand, the participants showed that job vacancies announced on Television seem to be convenient method. The method is still with problem. The presenters display addresses and contacts of employers in text format reading only the type of job vacancy loudly. The scripts on the Television screen are not accessible for visually impaired individuals. The media might have done that for the purpose of shortening the time. Ignorance of some of the contents of the job vacancy announcements results in the negligence of blind persons. Both the employers and blind participants revealed that job vacancy announcements via web-pages and short message services (SMS) are rare.

#### **4.2.1.5. Attitude and Understanding of the Employers towards the Blind Applicants**

##### **4.2.1.5.1. Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs and Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation**

Almost all participant government employers believed that blind applicants are citizens of the country who have knowledge and skills in the area of their qualifications. They gave their witnesses that there are two blind workers in their staff who are competent enough in their daily

activities. In contrast to the above belief, the employers put that blind employees need additional inputs especially computer to facilitate their task. Employers assume that appointing of blind applicants requires hiring of assistant for them. They explained that this might not be always true due to lack of budget to meet the requirements. When they were asked why this happens, they answered that, this is partly because they do not certainly expect and plan for a blind candidate in advance. They look for employing assistant after they were sure to hire blind employee.

#### **4.2.1.5.2. Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and Blind Graduates**

Information obtained from Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and other blind participants revealed that employers, particularly those from the private sectors, remain unaware of the concept of reasonable accommodation. This is particularly seen in the area of providing the necessary resources and inputs to enable the blind workers successfully perform the duties expected. They responded that employers should not support to the extent that their financial status might be at risk and at the same time they should not intentionally prevent job opportunities for blind applicants. Furthermore, the participants described that employers do not hire blind applicants for the reason that the blind do not take part in extra activities. Employers believe that the blind are limited in few tasks.

#### **4.2.1.6. Feeling of the Blind Graduates about the Problem of Employment**

Some blind graduates said that they had much worries when they think of the problem of getting job after graduation. They put that the problem is not only how to get employment. The real challenge they fear is that exists in both private and government employing institutions. The issue of employment and disability are not separately considered. It is more severe in most or all private employers. These institutions entirely focus on the cost benefit analysis-hiring blind persons is considered having extra costs. So they exclude candidates at the early stages of the job

vacancy announcement by putting additional requirements. In the other fields like journalism and teaching in private schools handwriting is a criterion. Consequently, the presumption of blind candidates for employment opportunities in private enterprises is so rare and discriminatory.

On the other hand, the participants responded that job related problems emanate from the nature of the curriculum of the country itself. They stated that the current curriculum is narrow in the context of the blind. It restricts the blind to the study of few social science disciplines. The other fields are prohibited for the blind not because of the fact that they cannot learn rather the curriculum undermines their possibilities to learn subjects such as arithmetic, geometry and psychology. Had these opportunities been allowed and the curriculums are modified conveniently, the problem of employment would be reduced from the level it is today.

#### **4.2.1.7. Policies and Legislations on the Employability of the Blind**

##### **4.2.1.7.1. Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City**

Employer participants from the Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada sub city were asked whether there is any legal document concerning blind employees. They revealed that the only documents at hand are Addis Ababa Civil Service Proclamation and its regulation which contains the provision about affirmative action for persons with disabilities. None of the employers were able to produce other documents stating about blind persons.

##### **4.2.1.7.2. Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and Blind Graduates**

The participants from ENAB and blind graduates were asked about the sort of policies and legislations that are available and practical to maximize the employability of the blind in Arada Sub-city. They disclosed that there are policies and legislations at the national level. A good

example of this is the provision in article 41(5) of the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) mentioning persons with disabilities.

However, they put their resentment against the phrase in the constitution stating that “the country shall provide support for persons with disabilities within available means”. They feared that employers get the wrong idea about the implication of the "available means" and prohibit blind applicants from competition by evoking the broad term of the constitution. Other Participants revealed that the phrase in the provision of the FDRE constitution should be reduced into a specific content in rules and directives to make it practical. This prevents the opportunity of getting a room for employers who wish to drop blind applicants. Blind participants revealed that there are legislations that regulate the overall employment rights and duties of the blind other than the constitution. Sadly, they reported that the proclamation seems as soft law that by itself is not supported by hard law particulars for its enforceability.

#### **4.2.1.8. Suggestions to Improve the Employability of Blind Applicants**

From the cumulative perspectives obtained through qualitative information from all participants from Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City, Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and Blind graduates revealed that there should be a sort of solution. They believed that awareness of the employers in government and private institutions should be raised at large. This helps to minimize, at least if not avoid, the challenges of employability of blind graduates at Arada Sub-city in particular and at the city level in general.

They also put that a greater emphasis should be given to the international declarations, conventions and protocols that Ethiopia signed and ratified as part of the laws of the country in its constitution. Side by side national legislations, this is to say rules, regulations and directives

should be put for the maximum rights of the persons with disability as a whole and the blind in particular practically and visibly. Two participants, graduates of College of Law and Governance Studies, explain the necessity of making strict laws and setting of standards and procedures to properly enforce the employment rights and duties of employers in government and private institutions.

#### **4.2.1.8.1. Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs**

Participants from Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs indicated that an integrated system should be promoted and encouraged among society in general and at a family level to solve the problem from the root not from the roof. Side by side, different bodies at the stake such as government institutions, international, national, city associations should be coordinated and collaborate to address for all disability issues and the blind employment.

#### **4.2.1.8.2. Ethiopian National Association of the Blind**

The participants from Ethiopian National Association of the Blind mentioned that searching for employment in different organizations should not be the only option for the blind. They underscored that there should be training of information communication technology and job creation for the blind after their graduation to enable them to do their own business and become entrepreneurs. To this effect, Arada sub-city should take the frontline initiatives to arrange the training for the blind in collaboration with the Addis Ababa Workers Association and Ministry of labor. This will enable them not only to be self-sufficient but also contribute their own share to the economy of their sub-city.



#### **4.2.1.8.3. Blind Graduates**

Blind graduates recommended that there should be a technological transformation. New technologies that can read hard copies like news papers for job vacancy announcement should be available to make employment opportunities accessible and conducive for the blind.

### **4.2.2 Result of Focus Group Discussion**

#### **4.2.2.1 Background information on the Focus Group Discussants**

A total of eight participants from the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City, the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and Blind graduates have participated in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The FGD was conducted in the compound of Ethiopian National Association of the Blind with representatives of the respective participant groups. Accordingly, the discussion involved one male participant from ENAB, one female representative from Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, one female from Office of Advocacy and Community-based Participation of Arada sub-city and two females and three males from blind graduates. The proportion of male and female participants is equal. Their ages range from 26 to 47 years.

The main topics of discussion focus on the following points in relation with the challenges and opportunities of employment of blind graduates:

- Process and procedures of employment of blind graduates,

- Attitudes of employers towards blind applicants,

- Working environment for blind persons,

- Intervention that should be considered to improve the employability of Blind persons.

#### 4.2.2.2. Process and procedures of employment

Participants disclosed various views with regard to procedures and processes of employment. Blind applicants do get acceptance as far as they fulfill the required criteria for the vacancy as one of the discussants presented.

A discussant from Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City revealed that their office has no problem to employ people with visual impairment without any discrimination set in prior to all applicants. She further revealed that they have recently employed two male blind applicants by making discussion with the concerned office to hire employees. But the difficulty was getting assistant persons for them with the require pace.

With regard to procedures used for vacancy announcements, she said that different methods were applied in their office based on the type of the job in which applicants are required. If it is internal vacancy, it is simply posted in the compound of their main and branch offices. External vacancy announcements are sent in advance in hard and soft copies to press institutions. She disclosed that both methods are made throughout the year. However, either the soft copies or the hard copies accessibility to the blind applicants are not duly observed.

On the other hand, two blind Participants reflected their views about vacancy announcements by saying that *vacancy announcements on newspapers are totally in ink writing only. "They never consider the accessibility of the announcements to blind applicants. We think of it as unfair because that is not the appropriate procedure and method to reach the unemployed blind graduates. However, other methods of vacancy announcement via electronics that are audible might be fitting to us."*

Participants continued to reveal that employment is a significant issue to be honored and to be discussed. Actually, it is a challenge for all persons in the country but more for blind graduates.

In some circumstances, blind graduates are not welcomed despite the fact that they fulfill the required standard for the vacancy as one of the discussants presented a case as follows:

*“I went to Ambo for job after graduation for I was assigned by the Ministry of Education. The Woreda’s educational bureau officers asked me in wonder how the government sent me here. They told me that this is not good place for me. The working environment is not good. I was also told that it is difficult for me to get basic services like water. They extended to speak out that their students may not accept me soon. I was advised to go back and request the government to reassign somewhere which might be convenient for me. However, after all the passages of distressing incident I stayed for two more years and things were not bad as such they made me to feel too terrified.”*

The other participant strengthened the above view by stating that both working areas and all the ways to home and living areas are full of hindrance for the blind., Problems also emanate from educational leaders. They are not flexible. They are bad in treating the blind even less than that of the ordinary societies. The challenges in Addis Ababa seem to be lesser but they are not addressing the blind graduates’ employability.

On the other hand, a participant from the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs painfully described that the challenges towards disability and blind Graduates employability emanates from the attitudinal and awareness problem. He explained as follows:

*“If everything goes wrong in attitude, nothing goes right in disability. First, we have to highlight the issue of awareness through training. The training should be based on the finding of researches and assessments. For example, we conducted a research report at the level of Addis Ababa City Administration in 2018 by investing a huge budget. We did*

*the same in the preceding years too, but the improvements are not yet satisfactory. There is a common misconception among the different segments of the societies at the city level.*

He established that communication on the challenges and opportunities of employment for blind graduates should first attitudinally be changed among the society. At present, there are little opportunities like the presence of disability associations that tries to provide training for persons with disability in general. In contrast the situation of employment for blind persons is backed by attitudinal problems. This culture should be changed without excuse if a real change is to be materialized.”

Discussants from among Blind graduate share similar information and ideas, on the aforementioned topic. Accordingly, they imparted that there are graduates who never get employment easily, some even go back to begging on the street while other are employed below their qualifications. Beside this, those who are employed have waited and suffered a year or more. In this regard there is a sad case, as one of the discussants pointed out:

*“I was graduated in law, from Jimma University. I applied in many places for attorney positions in Addis Ababa without success. My parents live in country side. They are poor struggling for their livelihood sometimes with success and mostly failure. It is unthinkable for me to go back to my families for nothing. They expect that I would be employed and send them some coins. Some days (religious days) I was begging to survive and find a job. After passing a dozen of hurdles, a new day came to my way. I applied to a job in my qualification as an attorney in one of the courts found in Addis Ababa. Suddenly, my employment process was interrupted and suspended due to unjustified reasons. Then I decided to bring the case to the court. The employers could not prove the*

*case. Finally, I became judgment holder. Justice emancipated after a lapse of more than a year.”*

The discussant noted that there are a lot of problems that emanate from disability not from the nature of the employment. The blind encounter many employment problems the same as she has faced. The difference is that they did not bring their case to the court and lost their rights as a result. All of the decisions are dependent on the will of their employers who take everything in their hands.

The discussant from the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind reflected the following on the challenges and opportunities of employment for the blind. “They are not totally unemployed. The chance is not zero. Zero means they are entirely unemployed. But they have very limited opportunities in a few disciplines like teaching.”

#### **4.2.2.3. Attitudes of Employers towards Blind Applicants**

Participants in the Focus Group discussion disclosed different pieces of information and ideas about attitudes of employers towards Blind Applicants. These are described as follows:

As per the opinions of the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, employers have both positive and negative attitudes and understandings. Some employers from the government institutions believe that it is only their duties to employ blind applicants as the criteria set. They are doing this because training has changed their thoughts and this is witnessed in some researches. On the other hand, others escape their responsibilities. There are some employers who hesitate to answer or procrastinate to employ blind applicants. They claim that the working environment is not yet fit to the blind instead of making the working area to accommodate the blind.

Similarly, the discussant from the Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City disclosed that they have the same attitude and understanding towards the blind employees so as to the sighted ones. She revealed her thoughts as follows:

*“Blind persons have their own capacities, knowledge and skills in the area of their field of study. For instance, there are two blind workers recently hired in office. They are good in their positions. I am very amazed with their different abilities. They are also vibrant in their social skills. The communication is very frank and honest towards what they perceive around their social life. If they are comfortable they directly tell you that it is fine. When they face something strange that is uncomfortable to them, they might disappoint you. Actually, we understand the situation and make a point on the inconvenience of the matter. We usually learn and correct each other.”*

No matter how the above mentioned scenarios seem interesting, the blind disclosed that getting employed is determined by the personal preference of the employers towards them. A blind graduate told his personal pitiful story narrating as follows:

*“I applied to a job vacancy posted. I passed the written exam and it was to make an interview. During the interview I was asked questions that are irrelevant to the job. The focus was on my visual impairment. I speculated that the employers were ready to reject me. I stood to debate that the procedure was not fair. One of the employers gave me a warning by saying if I continue to do the same he is going to cancel me from the list. I knew at this point that my destiny is rejection. Finally, I was told that they will give me a call. But that never happened as their words. My grade was very good.”* “I don’t trust that employers have positive attitude toward persons with disabilities. This is not the first time to happen. I know some blind applicants whom there are

cancelled by employers from the competition promptly when they understood their blindness. We tried to ask the reason by going to the office but no one replied for us the grounds.”

The other blind discussant also revealed that some employers appear to be sympathetic towards blind applicants. However, they changed their mind after they realized that the reality is the issue of employment. She revealed as follows:

*“I remember the first day I applied for job. After compiling all my documents I went to the sub-city where the government assigned me. At the first impression I received a warm welcoming. In the meantime they became a little bit aback and said how I was assigned here? Is it good here for you to be assigned? Questions like that were raised against my presence and future. I think some employers do not think of that we the blind are capable of performing out duties we are given. Anyhow, after a long conversation we went to agreement, and they gave me a sort of advices and told me to select the better one and finally things have been done. I began to think since then that there should be a proper communication with employers to solve their presumption regarding blind individuals and their employment situations.”*

#### **4.2.2.4. Working Environment**

In this section of the FGD, an endeavor has been made to identify the accessibility, modifications and supports provided to accommodate the rights and needs of the blind in the government institutions working environment. It was discussed that there are no conducive and modified working environment for the blind employee. On the other hand, the participants reported that the availability of special arrangements such as the provision of Braille materials, and appropriate working conditions should be placed for the blind at work place. Their application is so late to happen. They receive at their counter sighted employee did their part. It is after some

sort of conversation things come near the right track. In this regard Office of Advocacy and Labor and Social Affairs of Arada Sub-City revealed that there is lack of clear budget plan to it parallel to other employers.

On the other hand, one of the prevalent challenges that encounter blind employees in the working places, as mentioned by the discussants, includes lack of assistant persons. Nowadays there are assistant persons but they leave at any time when they get another better job. Some of them are university graduates. The employers pay them less salary below their qualifications. The inaccessibility of buildings, mobility barriers such as dangerous ditches and disorganized construction equipments in the compound, lack of adaptive technologies, unclean rest rooms and recreational areas are still the other problems the discussants raised.

#### **4.2.2.5. Intervention that should be considered to improve the Employability of Blind Graduates**

The focus group discussion participants suggested some measures to alleviate the employability challenges of blind graduates that they might face during the employment process, procedures of employment and methods of job vacancy announcements in Arada Sub-city.

To this effect, the government has the priority responsibility for making impact assessment on the proper implementation of all the existing declarations, conventions and other relevant legal provisions regarding persons with disabilities. There should be the necessary supervision and follow-up to oversee current employment challenges and opportunities of blind applicants in government and private institutions. The government should provide awareness creations for employers to change their attitudes and understanding. Major institutional infrastructure should be modified to the level as required by international and domestic standards suggested.



It was also discussed that there should be prevalence of administrative accountability in case of employers failure to discharge their proper official duties. Otherwise they become more arbitrary in doing things towards the blind. Behavior of the employers should be regulated by the rules and regulations available to the circumstance.

It was remarkably suggested that job related trainings should not be delivered by non-blind trainers for persons with disabilities in general and for the blind in particular. In contrast it should be given by persons with disability or the blind. Participants stated that sighted people might not understand exactly all the feeling of persons with disabilities naturally even if they speak out as if they understand everything. They thought that sighted persons are simulating. Real experiences come from persons with disability who passed difficulties from the first day of job application up to the work environment.

The blind should have access to short-term training and hold Certificate of Competence (COC) after graduation. They stated that this might be helpful to unemployed blind graduates to have the chances to become an entrepreneur or enable them to compete in areas of job creation in their Sub-city and principal residences.

The other point suggested to overcome the existing problem is that blind graduates themselves should learn to exercise their rights. The bureaucracy might not easily be pierced. However, a strong self-courage and high level of commitment is required. Blind graduates should never let employers to override the legally provided rights. They stated that there are instances of violation of the preferential rights and treatments for persons with disabilities and they refrain from being assertive for their employment opportunities.

The participants also underlined that vacancy announcements should be accessible in Braille format for blind applicants. To realize this, employers might communicate with the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind to post vacancy announcements in Braille in addition to the ink one. This might be good if posted near the association's compounds where the blind can access them. Besides, the vacancy announcements should be posted in the work places of the blind where they may not miss the alternative means to find them for in consideration to their areas of specialization.

Furthermore, the preparation of job vacancy announcements in audio format was proposed. The presentation of the audio materials should also be in the way of audible to all slow and active listeners. On the other hand, all necessary facilities and inputs should be fulfilled. Employers should be equal to both types of employees i.e. the sighted and the blind found in their institutions. Side by side, qualified assistant persons should be hired in due time to facilitate all the activities. Equally important, assistant persons should be confident enough to claim for the rights of the blind and serve in a safe way.

## **Chapter five**

### **5. Discussion**

The aim of the study is to explore the challenges and opportunities blind graduates encounter after graduation in the realm of employment in Arada Sub-city, Addis Ababa. To this concern, in this section the master key research findings are discussed under each of the research questions. The discussion is based on the findings generated from interview and focus group discussion data. The first part is a discussion on the findings regarding what sorts of challenges do blind persons encounter for employment after graduation. The second section is a discussion on what the attitude of the employers towards the blind applicants is. The third part is on what the feeling of the blind persons is about the problem of employment and employers. The fourth part is a discussion on findings regarding the sort of policy issues and practical conditions available that could maximize the employability of blind persons in the job market. This is followed by findings about what should be done to improve the employability of blind applicants.

#### **5.1 Challenges Blind Graduates Encounter for Employment after Graduation**

The two major findings of the study under this research question are the following:

The assignment of blind graduates in education fields in different parts of the city by the Addis Ababa Bureau of Education is considered to be the available opportunity. However, assignment by itself does not mean the end of the problem. Blind Graduates who have been assigned in various areas suffer from poor infrastructures. All the aspects in their ordinary lives and the working environments are full of physical barriers that impede the free mobility of the blind.

Beside this, the commencement of affirmative action by the virtue of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is another area of opportunity for persons with disabilities as a whole and the blind in particular. But truly speaking, it has some limitations of practice on the ground. The blind are missing this chance as they are rejected by some employers at the beginning of the procedure of employment like application and interview. As stated by Tirussew & et al 2013 there are positive beginnings by some employers such as direct assignment and employment by government organizations such as Ministry of Education and Ministry of Justice through quota system . Additionally, Ministry of Civil Service' has distributed a circular to facilitate the employment of graduates with disabilities in different organizations.

In the contrast, another important finding of the study is that the job vacancy announcement modalities are not accessible to blind graduates. Job advertisements on Newspapers are entirely in ink and thus they are inaccessible to the blind. New graduates suffer from that economically and it brings emotional distresses on them. It is a kind of employment discrimination against the blind persons in their country. Really it is a humiliation to observe this in the contemporary world. Denying employment through inaccessibility of job vacancy announcements is a threat to the personal livelihood of the blind persons to survive. It is recently indicated that there is a challenge for persons with disabilities such as inadequate preparation on job hunting skills and limited access to vacancy announcements (Tirussew & et al. 2013).

## **5.2 Attitude of the Employers towards the Blind Applicants**

From the findings of the interview and the FGD the researcher is persuaded to conclude that employers have a mixed attitude and understanding about blind applicants. Some focus on the part of the disability and react emotionally and morally with sympathy; they ignore the relevant

part, employment. This is still considered in the research to be wrong in that employers fail to observe the real relationship between the personality of the individual and the employment. Other employers think that blind persons do not fit the job in their institution. They provide a prejudicial justification by pushing the blind applicants to find other job areas or places. Of course, there are exceptions where some government employers are welcoming blind applicants for employment places they compete for. On the other side, private organizations have no room to the employment of the blind persons. Either they have no awareness about disabilities in general circumstances or have developed a wrong perception that hiring blind person is a waste to their business.

It is possible to conclude at this particular point that blind graduates are segregated from the employment environment due to the misunderstanding of the private employers severely and from government employers partially. In general, employers do not rationally think about blind persons. They are doing arbitrarily by their personal will without sufficient grounds to block the employment opportunity.

### **5.3 Feeling of the Blind Graduates about the Problem of Employment and Employers**

Findings with regard to the views of blind graduates about the magnitude of the problem of employment and employers reveal that they are not much more disappointed by the employment problems when compared with that of the employers. They believe that the problem of unemployment is not a problem that concerns only them but also a problem of all graduates in the country. While this is a common fact that employment problem as the order of the day, the difference is reflected in the curriculum itself. Employment for blind persons is narrow or limited. This mainly happens due to the fact that their background study in the university is limited to

few social science disciplines. Consequently, they feel that there are few job opportunities after their graduation. To this fact the government should rethink to modify and extend to more fields to create further employment opportunities if really thinks that citizens are equal if the play grounds are accessible for all.

In relation with the employers, blind persons revealed that some employers are good enough in their personality. They treat them in most human approach from the introduction up to all the process of employment. They host them in harmony in the social environment. In the contrary, some employers are hostile in their personality. They act like as they give them the job as a green card. They have really stereotype thoughts towards the capacity of blind persons. Their thoughts are more unfriendly towards blind persons in private organizations. They developed these attitude through their direct practices and observation of the rejection of their friends by private employers. In many instances like vacancy announcement and job criteria, blind applicants are discriminated. During employment, persons with visual impairment are discriminated and are also totally denied of their rights to employment merely for having impairment (ILO, 2009; Mindahun, 2006). In the world of work, they are discriminated on training and promotions. And, in most cases, they are not even provided with facilities that enable them to work properly. Though the unemployment and underemployment of persons with disabilities continue to be serious social problem in Ethiopia, there are still few persons employed in public and private sectors. However, employment for persons with disabilities in the country at large is not an easy process; it requires a great deal of patience and fierce struggle. And often, it is not uncommon to find a number of unemployed persons with disabilities with the necessary job qualifications and with pertinent college diplomas that the job demands (*Tirussew, 2005; National Employment Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia, 2009*).

#### **5.4. Available Legal Regimes and Procedures to Maximize the Employability of Blind Graduates**

Findings regarding the legal practices in relation to employment of blind persons interestingly revealed that there are massive gaps between the principles and the implementation aspects. Neither international instruments nor national legislations are implemented properly. Accordingly, these instruments are not effectively applied by employers. The reason is that there are no concerned bodies which impose sanctions or remedies on employers for their wrong activities. Low awareness of the blind about the existing legal provisions also contributed for the absence of enforcement. Existing laws as a protective to the rights of the blind are not properly perceived. Lack of implementation drastically affects the economic and social well-being of the blind. There should be a paradigm shift that discriminating the persons with disabilities and the blind impact is affecting the economic development of the country. In this regard it is indicated that the unemployment rate for persons with disability in the country is about 98%. Only 2% are employed. As a result the country loses 5% Gross Domestic Products annually (ILO, 2009). It could be inferred that the issues of disability should be the concern of the society at large. On the other hand, the shortfall of employing blind candidates in line with the existing relevant legal instruments is a clear violation to their basic human rights and freedoms.

#### **5.5. What Should Be Done to Improve the Employability of Blind Applicants**

In the finding, there are some important suggestions that are forwarded by the participants of the study both in the interview and Focus Group Discussion. The major suggestions include that there should be a cooperation between the advertisement enterprises and employers to prepare vacancy announcements in Braille. It shall be posted in the most accessible areas to blind persons. Moreover, soft copies of the vacancy announcements should be prepared in audios and presented

and disseminated to the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind where they are transmitted through the mini-media available there. Beside this, the awareness creation to the society in general and employers in particular should be facilitated. There should be a follow-up on the side of the government for the full realization of the legal instruments to enforce. All important human and material resources need to be in place in the working environments. Without the fulfillment of these, it is difficult to truly say that there are equal opportunities for blind graduates and those without visual impairment. All the stake holders established to support the interests of persons with disabilities should work in strength for the rights and duties of the individuals they represent. They should be free from prioritizing their private interests and the tendency to trade for corrupt practices.



## **Chapter six**

### **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **6.1. Conclusions**

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions have been made:

The study showed that there are some good practices that encourage the employability of blind graduates in government institutions. The existing positive initiative needs to be further encouraged and scaled-up in private institutions, non-governmental organizations in Arada Sub-city and Addis Ababa City administration.

There is a major challenge of employability of blind persons in Addis Ababa in general and Arada sub-city in particular. The major problem is the attitude of the society about disability. Yet it is affecting blind graduates in the transition from higher institution to join the labor market. Practically many employers are reserved to hire blind candidates.

There is a great need for rethinking of the job vacancy announcements and criteria set for job for are found to be discriminatory against the blind graduates from the commencement of the appearance of different jobs in Arada sub-city, Addis Ababa. Key point of the rethinking should be the availability of Braille job vacancy announcements and job related particulars in public notice boards for the blind.

Employers' attitude and understanding towards blind persons is very shallow. There is a need to focus for a shift of employing blind graduates from permissible employers in government institutions to preventive private employers. Proper employment procedures should be strictly followed in addressing the career and employment of blind graduates.

The international and national legal documents of employment are not enforced by employers that are useful and necessary for blind graduates. Only the civil service employment proclamation is found in respective offices. Misplaced proclamations, rules and regulations and directives should be organized and become more available in all employers' office. The failure to follow this duty should be a call for an offence to the rights of blind persons and legal penalties may be enforced.

The present practice shows that there are limited human and material resources provided for the blind, inadequate assistive devices at the work environment and ineffective utilization of technologies. There is a need for improving and accessing the working environment for blind graduates in Arada Sub-city.

The current level of knowledge and awareness about the abilities and contributions of the blind on the part of employers in Arada Sub-city is highly inadequate. There is a need to improve this through coordinated, targeted, and continuous awareness creation mobilization.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the present practice of employment of blind graduates in the short-term and change and transform it in the long-term:

### **6.2.1. Short Term**

**In the short term**, efforts should be made to bring about change in the following areas where the employment of blind graduates has limitations:

Through awareness creation: Conducive environment should be created by which employers and civil societies established in the name of persons with disabilities would gain better awareness of

employment challenges. The common set areas of awareness raising help them to identify their roles in their respective institution and association.

All employers, the press and other concerned institutions should focus on how job vacancy announcements are prepared in Braille and audio formats in accessible areas near the working areas of the blind and the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind to reduce the challenges and enforcing the existing legal documents.

Employers should hire the proper assistant persons in advance as it is a right to the blind to work productively to their utmost potential and it creates job opportunity for the sighted persons. Every necessary equipment should be available without hesitation and delay in the working environment for the blind.

### **6.2.2. Long Term**

**In the long term,** employment of blind graduates should be accessible and transformed through the following measures:

There should be a great leap to launch national awareness raising programs through public and private Medias to the general public, policy makers, employers and educational institutions.

Developing feasible strategies to implement and enforce the national and international legal instruments on employment of persons with disabilities in general and blind persons in particular.

Strengthening sector units to have professional consultants to conduct further a large scale researches throughout the sub-city to alleviate problems related to disability.

Revising our educational curriculum so as to make special needs education a subject from the primary education up to the higher institutions to change the attitude of the society very substantially.

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## **Annexes**

### **Addis Ababa University**

#### **Department of Special Needs Education**

**Topic :The Challenges, and Opportunities Blind Graduates Encounter During Employment. The case of Arada Sub-city, Addis Ababa .**

#### **Interview**

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Time interview will start: \_\_\_\_\_

Time interview will end: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Introduction**

The theme of this interview is to investigate the challenges that blind persons as operationally defined in this study as persons who are total blind graduated encounter during employment in the case of Arada sub-city, Addis Ababa .To this effect, the interview will include Blind Persons, Arada Workers Association, Ethiopian National Association, Addis Ababa Worker Association Office, and Ministry of Labor .Therefore, this interview could assist to collect pertinent data regarding challenges and opportunities that total blind persons encounter after the graduation from the higher institutions. This interview outcomes maybe important for government and private institution employers and interested groups to have some insights about the challenges as well as the support to be rendered.

**Ethics:** As the researcher in this study should be accountable in an attempt to generate information for the research purpose an appropriate ethical clarifications will be considered. Correspondingly, the following ethical agreements will be established and debriefed for the participants before the actual interview will start.

The purpose of the research is academic.

The participation and contribution in this interview will be on voluntary basis.

The participants have the right to discontinue or change their ideas and to edit the recorded data.

The given information belongs to the interviewee while the analysis and the interpretation are mandated by the researcher.

The participant's privacy, anonymity, sensitivity and confidentiality of their information will be guaranteed.

Thank You in advance for Your Cooperation!



## **Annex-I: Interview Guide Questions for participants**

### **1. Checklists for interview questions for Blind Persons**

Educational Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age : \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Status \_\_\_\_\_

#### **a) Initial open-ended interview questions**

1. Tell me about how you appeared for the first time to apply for jobs?
2. How do you describe the employment opportunity for blind persons?
3. What are the challenges you encountered in the process of employment?
4. How do you explain the announcements of vacant positions for the blind person!

#### **b) Intermediate open-ended interview questions**

1. What are the most difficult problems you encounter in the courses of your employment? Tell me the sources of these problems?
2. How do you manage the challenges you have faced?
3. Tell me about your thoughts and feelings about your employers?

4. Do you see any available legal documents for blind persons' employment. If any, how do you describe their practicality?

**c) Ending questions**

What do you think, are there any important ways to improve the employability of blind persons?

What do you like to recommend for someone who is concerned about blind person's employment?

## **Annex-II: Interview Guiding questions for Office of Advocacy and Community-Based**

### **Participation of Arada Sub-City**

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in the Office: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **a) Open-ended interview questions**

What do you think about the employment situation of blind persons after their graduation in your sub-city?

What are the strengths and limitations in relation to employment of blind persons?

#### **b) Intermediate interview questions**

1. What are the available opportunities for the employability of blind persons?

What are the major problems in the employment of blind persons?

What is your role in supporting the employability of blind persons?

What is your perceptions towards the employing graduate blind persons?

#### **c) Ending interview questions**

1. Is there anything you would like to add?

2. What recommendations, if any, do you like to forward?

## **Annex-III: Interview Guide for Ethiopian National Association of the Blind**

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in the Association: \_\_\_\_\_

### **a) Initial semi-structure interview questions**

1. How do you explain the employment opportunities of blind persons after their graduation ?
2. What types of job vacancy are available that blind persons compete? What are the criteria set for making them candidate ?

### **b). Intermediate open-ended interview questions**

1. What are the typical challenges that blind persons faces in their employment efforts ?
2. How does the employers think of the blind persons applicant?
3. What is the expectation and the reality of the blind graduates about the issues of employment? How, if at all, are their thoughts and feelings about the problem to employment ?
4. How do you assess the enforceability of available policies and legal instruments that help to blind during the employment ? How have these been helpful?
5. Do you assist blind graduates in the process of their employment? What role do you play in their employment ?

**c) Ending interview questions**

1. After having this interview, what advice would you give to overcome the employability of blind persons in Arada sub-city in particular and in the country in general ?

2. Is there anything you would like to ask me ?

## **Annex IV: Interview Guide for Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs**

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in the Bureau: \_\_\_\_\_

### **a) Initial open-ended interview questions**

1. How do you state the employment situations for blind persons in Arada sub-city, Addis Ababa ?

2. What is the unemployment rate of blind graduates currently? What do you think are the major causes for their unemployment??

### **b) Intermediate open-ended interview questions**

1. What are the major hindrance to employ blind persons following their graduation? How to solve the problems?

2. What is the expectation of the employers from blind applicants ?

3. How do you describe the accessibility of infrastructures and public services for blind persons to facilitate their employment ?

4. How do you assess the national legislations and constitutional provision in relation to blind persons employment rights ? How about the accessibility of Information Communication Technology?

**c) Ending interview questions**

1. How the employment barriers to blind persons could be addressed?
2. What are the most helpful ways to be recognized to solve the challenges of employability of blind persons?

## **Annex V: Focus Group Discussion Guides**

The following questions are administered to a mixture of participants that includes Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs, Office of Advocacy and Community-Based Participation of Arada Sub-City, Ethiopian National Association of the Blind and blind graduates. A total of 8 participants (5 Male and 3 Female) are purposely selected. The discussion will start after setting a ground rules such as there is no right or wrong answers so every participants opinion was heard.

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in Association: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think about the challenges and opportunities the blind persons faces that has brought us here today?

In your sub-city, what is the attitudes and feelings of the employers towards the blind applicants? How do blind graduates apply for job?

According to you, what is the feelings of blind graduates about the issue of employment?

How do you see the policies and legislations available to support the employability of blind persons?

According to you who should take the responsibility to improve the employability of blind persons? Please explain?

Do you have any other suggestions?

Thank you for taking the time to discuss!



## Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in anyway other universities and that all sources of information wed for the thesis have been fully acknowledged.

Name

Fate Tilmo

Signature

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Place

Addis Ababa University

Date of submission

June, 2020

Advisor

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Tirussew T. (Prof.)