

Barriers Faced by People with Visual Impairment in Securing Employment in the City of Manzini, Eswatini

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate barriers faced by people with visual impairment in securing employment. The study was qualitative and used a phenomenological research design. Data was collected from 8 participants who are visually impaired and 4 employers using individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings from the study indicate that people with visual impairment are faced with negative attitude from employers, from the immediate family and from society in general. The study showed that Swazi culture and traditional beliefs play a role in perpetuating discrimination of people with visual impairment. The findings also reveal that people with visual impairment lack of relevant skills and qualifications to secure employment for themselves. The study concluded that negative attitude and lack of qualifications play a major role in influencing hiring decisions and limiting chances of their employment. Thus the study recommended that there must be an on-going public education on visual impairment to dispel the myths and misconceptions which have been found to contribute to the stigmatization and discrimination of PVI. It is also recommended that there should be the establishment of disability specific training facilities together with a disability scholarship fund to increase the chances of access to education and training for people with visual impairment.

KEYWORDS: Barriers, visual impairment, phenomenology, employment opportunities, People with Visual Impairment (PVI)

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Setting

The employment of people with disabilities, regardless of type, seems to be a challenge across many countries. People with disabilities are generally under-represented in the labour market across the world, despite their willingness to secure and maintain employment (Lindsay et al., 2014). Several studies, both in developed and developing countries, reveal that the working age of people with disabilities experience a significantly low employment rate than their counterparts who do not have disabilities (Strindlund et al., 2019; Opoku et al., 2017; Gottlieb & Myhill, 2015). This situation is reportedly worse for people with visual impairment. According to Goertz et al., (2010), unlike people with other

disabilities, people with visual impairment have more difficulty in obtaining and maintaining employment. Research effort in the past has been dedicated to factors limiting access to employment for people with disabilities in general. Yet literature on the barriers experienced by people with visual impairment in seeking employment in Eswatini, remain scanty.

1.1.1. The Prevalence and Employment of people with visual impairment in the SADC Region

According to the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB 2011), in 2010 there were over 724 000 people in South Africa who were

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experiencing vision impairment (StatsSA, 2011). The SANCB (2018) reports that prevalence of visual impairment in South Africa is the highest of all disabilities at 32%. It is estimated that about 97% of all the blind and partially sighted people in the Republic of South Africa are unemployed. A similar situation in Zimbabwe is reported by Munemo and Tom (2013) who reveals that the employment rate for people with visual impairment is very low. This is the case despite the vocational skills and education that many of them have. Lindfield et al. (2012) reports a prevalence rate of 2.9% blindness in Zambia, the majority of whom are above the age of 40 years and are unemployed. According to Kachanga and Imasiku (2012) the situation is worse for women with blindness and low vision Zambia. They report that many women with blindness do not have education. Those with a decent level of education remain unemployed. Such empirical evidence from research that was conducted in different countries in the SADC region, raises questions on what it is that make people with visual impairment fail to secure employment. This prompted the researchers in this study to investigate the barriers experienced by the visual impaired people to secure employment in the city of Manzini in Eswatini.

A literature search reveals that there is not much documented information about the population of visually impaired people in Eswatini. The absence of a national survey on the prevalence of visual impairment in the country leaves no option but to rely on WHO regional extrapolations. According to Sukati, Moodley and Mashige (2019), the prevalence of blindness and visual impairment in Eswatini is estimated to be approximately 1% from a total population of just above 1.1 million people (Eswatini Population and Housing Census, 2017). In a country report on disability in Eswatini, Mavundla (2015) reported that the most prevalent form of disability in Eswatini is the visual disabilities. Mavundla found that 46% of the 171 347 people with disabilities in Eswatini have visual disabilities. This is in line with the World Health Organization's estimate that generally for every country, between 0.7% and 1% of its population is visually impaired. The researchers in this current study observed that people with visual impairment are a common site in public spaces such as walkways and shopping malls in the towns and cities of Eswatini.

1.1.2. Definition of impairment

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health defines impairment as a problem in the function or structure of a person's body due to a health condition (International

Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, 2001). The World Health Organisation further clarifies that a visual impairment occurs when an eye condition affects the visual system and its vision functions (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019). Another important defining factor of the concept is that the condition of reduced visual performance should be such that it cannot be remedied by refractive correction, surgery or medical methods (Naipal and Rampersad, 2018).

1.1.3. Definition of employment barrier

A barrier to Employment means any condition that may hinder a person's hiring, promotion or participation in the labour market (Hong et al., 2021). Barriers to employment exist in two forms, namely; structural barriers and individual barriers. Structural barriers refer to the condition that no matter how good the individual's qualifications may be, elements within the social and economic structures make it difficult for the individual to obtain employment while individual barriers mean personal characteristics that make it difficult for job seekers to obtain employment regardless of how favourable the social structure may be (Hong et al., 2021).

1.1.4. A global picture of the employment of people with visual impairment (PVI)

A survey by Varma et al. (2016) reveals that in the United States of America (USA) and Canada about 14.62 million people had some form of visual impairment. They mentioned that this number is expected to double by 2050. Bell and Mino (2015) found that in the USA only 33% of this population of between the ages 16 and 64 were reported to be in the labour force, with 20% of them employed on a full-time basis. The majority of people with visual impairment who are employed are not only paid at low rates, but are also less likely to be employed at levels commensurate with their education and skills (Goertz et al., 2010). The Canadian vision summit held in 2020, though without exact figures, reports that there are too many Canadians with visual impairment who remain underemployed or unemployed

Approximately 26.3 million people in the African region have a form of visual impairment (WHO, 2019). Country by country statistics is scanty as very few African countries have data at national level. However, Ansah (2017), reporting on the prevalence of visual impairment and blindness observed in Juaben Hospital eye clinic that Ghana has a 29% and 4% prevalence rates of visual impairment and blindness respectively. A study done by Onabolu et al. (2018) on rehabilitation and paid employment for blind people observed that the rate of paid

employment of blind people in Nigeria was 27.3%. Mousa et al. (2014) did a similar study in Egypt and reported that the employment rate of people with disabilities in Egypt, regardless of type, is generally low. The low employment rate of people with visual impairment in different countries is a cause for concern and a reason for one to investigate what hinders them from obtaining employment.

According to the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB 2011), in 2010 there were over 724 000 people in South Africa who were experiencing visual impairment. The prevalence of visual impairment in South Africa remains the highest of all disabilities (32%) and it is estimated that 97% of all blind and partially sighted people in the country are unemployed (SANCB 2018). A similar situation was observed by Kachanga and Imasiku (2012) who investigated the livelihoods of women with visual impairment in Lusaka (Zambia). They found that, despite their education levels, most of them were unemployed and discriminated against by people with normal vision and by potential employers. Normally having high educational levels increases access to jobs and acceptability in the labour market. However, this seems not to be the case for people with visual impairment. Hence the need to look into the barriers to their employment.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Literature on barriers to employment in Eswatini is scanty. Disability studies carried out in different countries reveal that people with disabilities endure high rates of unemployment (McDonnall & Tatch, 2021; Gottlieb et al., 2015; Munemo & Tom, 2019). According to Goertz et al. (2010) the unemployment situation is worse for people with visual impairment as they suffer the lowest employment rate compared to those living with other disabilities.

The researcher observed that people with blindness and low vision are a common sight in the cities of Manzini and Mbabane as they beg for alms next to busy streets and shopping malls. Although this weighs less as research evidence, such an observation is testament to the non-participation of people with blindness and low vision in the labour market in Eswatini. It is against this backdrop that the need arises to carry out an investigation into the barriers to employment faced by people with visual impairment in the Manzini city in Eswatini.

1.3. Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate employment barriers faced by people with visual impairment in the Manzini city in Eswatini.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine barriers to employment faced by people with visual impairment in Manzini city.
2. To explore the attitudes of employers on the employment of people with visual impairment.
3. To explore experiences of people with vision impairment in seeking and maintaining employment.
4. To suggest intervention strategies for improving the employability of people with visual impairment

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Frame (The Critical Disability Theory)

This study is informed by the Critical Disability Theory (CDT). The Critical Disability Theory is based on the claim that disability is not fundamentally a question of medicine or health; nor is it just an issue of sensitivity and compassion; rather, it is a question of politics and power (-lessness), power over and power to. The theory centres disability as it compares the norms and values of liberalism with their actualization in the daily life of people with disabilities. The CDT is based on seven elements, namely: the social model of disability, valuing diversity, multidimensionality, the rights and voices of people with disabilities, language and transformative politics.

2.1.1. The Social Model of Disability

The CDT adopts the social model which is based on the principles that, disability is a social construct, and not the inevitable consequence of impairment. Secondly, disability is best characterised as a complex interrelationship between impairment, individual response to impairment and the social environment; thirdly, the social disadvantage experienced by people with disability is caused by the physical, institutional and attitudinal environments which fail to meet the needs of people who do not match the social expectation of 'normalcy'. The researchers assume that perhaps securing employment by people with visual impairment is hampered by the physical, institutional and the attitudinal environments of the possible work places of people with visual impairment in Eswatini.

2.1.2. Valuing Diversity

A fundamental principle of liberalism is equality. Race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity are all differences to which liberalism has had to respond. The main challenge has always been the question of how to deal with an existing difference to achieve equality (Hosting, 2008); by ignoring it or by acting on it. With disability, differences should not just be

dismissed as irrelevant, because that has the effect of rejection and marginalization of the person. Instead, a response which makes adjustments to eliminate the obstacle and enable the person to participate as an equal is required. For the CDT, being identified and identifying as a person with disability is central to understanding one's social position with its attendant opportunities and limitations. It is in that vein that PVI will be accorded the same opportunity with those who 'normal sighted' in the labour market.

2.1.3. Human Rights

CDT embraces legal rights as an indispensable tool to advance the equality claims of disabled people and to promote their full integration into all aspects of their society while at the same time valuing and welcoming the diversity that people with a disability bring to their communities.

2.1.4. Voice of people with disability

The CDT privileges the stories of people with a disability and gives them a platform to be heard. Able bodied people think about disability from their able bodied perspective. It is only by listening to and valuing the perspectives of those who are living with disabilities that the able bodied can begin to understand that even severe disability does not have to prevent a joyful and desired life.

2.1.5. Language

The words and images used to portray people with disabilities have a direct effect on social attitudes towards people with disabilities. Historically and even today, people with disability have been and are portrayed as deficient, pitiable, wicked or malign, dangerous or valueless (Hosting, 2008). The CDT examines how negative attitudes are revealed through a discourse of personal tragedy with disability rendering individuals powerless, vulnerable and dependent. That on its own may create a barrier to PVI to secure employment.

2.1.6. Transformative policy

The goal of the CDT is also about power on 'who and what gets valued'. The policy response to the medical model of disability focuses on preventing and curing disability or providing support for those who do not respond to medical model interventions. The CDT provides the theoretical basis for different policy responses to disability. Those are policies of inclusion, equality and autonomy. Thus, the Critical Disability Theory is quite relevant to inform this study. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Swaziland National Disability Policy of 2013 and the Persons with Disabilities Act number 16 of 2018, just to mention a few, agree with the CDT on empowering

people with visual impairment in securing employment.

2.2. A Review of Empirical Studies

The problem of low employment rates for people with disabilities, and people with blindness and low vision in particular, is well documented in the international space. Studies conducted in different parts of the world reveal varying information with regard to impediments to employment and lived experiences for people with visual impairment.

Donalson (2017) investigated the lived experiences of the PVI in the USA and found that they experience some challenges in the workplace. The study revealed that despite the developed economy and progressive society of the USA, the PVI still face challenges such as discrimination from the close-minded employers who appear to be unwilling to take chances with someone with a disability. Gupta, Sukhai and Wittich (2021) made similar findings in Canada that people with blindness and low vision faced labour force discrimination due to their condition. This is similar to the situation in the UK where people with visual impairment are reportedly faced with negative employers' attitude and lack of adjustment to the workplace as the main barriers to employment (Coffey, Coufopoulos & Kinghorn, 2014).

In a study conducted in Ethiopia, Hebtamu (2021) revealed that at work people with blindness and low vision were faced with challenges such as absence of braille display, lack of professional growth opportunities, stigma and general discrimination. This study found that workers with visual impairment found themselves in an environment (both human and physical) that hindered them from progressing to achieve their professional goals. Another study conducted by Sharaf (2015) in Egypt revealed the barriers faced by visually impaired people in finding employment were mainly lack of access to formal education as well as failure to enforce the laws meant to promote employability of people with disabilities.

Gyamfi (2020) found that in addition to other barriers, the employment situation for women with visual impairment in Ghana was further worsened by the fact that the labour market was charged with the Ghanaian culture that regarded women as inferior human beings. The condition of being visually impaired made their situation even worse as they had limited opportunities and support for work force participation.

III. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach and uses the phenomenological research design to investigate the barriers faced by people with visual impairment in

securing employment in the city of Manzini in Eswatini. Data were collected from the Manzini and Matsapha municipal areas and surrounding areas where the informants resided. The target population for this study were people with visual impairment who have reached minimum legal employable age and employers who are within the study area. The study used a combination snowball, convenience and purposive sampling techniques to select participants. The sampling was continued until data saturation was reached which resulted in 12 participants, 4 of which were employers. Data were collected using semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews and a focus group discussion. Five of the eight people with visual impairment participated focus group discussions. All the participants were interviewed individually. Data were analysed using the thematic data analysis procedure by Braun and Clark (Braun & Clark, 2006).

For ethical considerations, the researchers explained the purpose of the research project to the participants in order to get them to voluntarily consent to take part in the study. Consent forms were prepared, read and explained to the participants together with the purpose of this study. The participants were requested to sign the consent forms before data collection exercise began. The consent forms for PVI were produced in braille and then signed using the traditional “ink and thump” method.

IV. Findings

In this study participants revealed that PVI faced several barriers to full participation in the job market. They reported that these range from person-centred factors such as lack of education and skills and poor independent living and mobility skills to environmental/institutional factors such as people’s negative attitude towards PVI, lack of properly inclusive basic education centres, lack of accommodative skills’ training facilities and non-inclusive infrastructure.

4.1.1. Negative attitudes

Interviews with participants revealed that one of the main barriers that they faced when looking for jobs or in the workplaces was the negative attitude from actual and potential employers as well as colleagues. This kind of attitude seems to be a trend from the general society towards people with blindness as participants explained that many people see them as lesser human beings or second class citizens. It was revealed that people with visual impairment were generally treated in ways that diminished their human dignity in many public places such as bus ranks, market places, walk ways etc. The following subthemes emerged from the main theme:

4.1.1.1. Family and societal attitudes

The participants reported that the negative attitude at family level created a barrier to employment as PVI were neglected, discouraged, underrated and treated unfairly. Participants revealed how some of their families were not keen to get them to school to get an education that could enhance their competitiveness in the job market. It was also revealed that, unlike other children, many PVI start schooling very late as their families do not see them as useful and likely to help the family in future. The participants reported that some of them eventually got to school through the help of charity organisations and the church. When the researchers probed on what stood in the way of PVI employment, a male participant explained as follows:

I think it is bad attitude that people have for a blind person. A lot of people feel sorry for us and think we are simply good for nothing. Instead of giving a blind person a chance to prove himself, people just think we cannot do anything other than ask for alms (VI Participant G, Focus Group Discussion).

Asked the same question, another participant pointed to the family as the source of the trouble that PVI face later in life when looking for employment. The following quotation is a testimony to the above discussion:

...Sometimes you find that they tell the parent about the high expense of the facilities, and that combines with the negative attitude that parents have towards the visually impaired child. So you find that even the parent will choose not to spend such money on a disabled child whom they think cannot be capable to any progress in life (VI Participant A, In-Depth Individual Interview).

4.1.1.2. Attitude from potential and actual employers

People with visual impairment revealed that they were faced with a negative attitude from employers when participating in the job market. Some of the employers assumed that people with disabilities, especially those with vision impairments had nothing to contribute to their organizations other than add problems to the business. Potential employers believe that people with visual impairment required too much supervision and assistance to do even the simplest task and are incapable of doing work on their own. The following quote corroborates the above issues:

Well, most of the time we get a negative attitude from employers, as early as when bringing an application. You hear them asking

how you think you are going to be able to do the work in your condition. And I must say it is very discouraging. People behave like they are sorry for us due to our condition and feel one cannot do anything for themselves, let alone work for someone (VI Participant B, In-Depth Individual Interview).

The findings from focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews with PVI also reveal that traditional beliefs embedded in Swati culture also act as a major barrier that PVI face in seeking and maintaining employment. It was revealed that it has always been common practice in Swati traditional settings that people with disabilities are not allowed to access certain places. Participants pointed to places such as the National Cattle Byre (the King's Kraal) and other parts of royal residences as well as attending traditional functions such as Incwala and Buganu. The participants believe that this extends to the norm that people with disabilities are not allowed to get closer to the King and other members of the royal family. Such practices tend to limit PVI chances of employment and upward mobility as the government is literally the main employer. These traditional beliefs seem to add to the negative attitude which PVI face in society and which diminish their chances of employment. The verbal quotes below serve as confirmation to the issues discussed above:

I think many still believe that blind people are not fully human like everyone else. And I think that still comes from the traditional beliefs systems... We are underrated. I know that even at the national cattle byre, we are not allowed to go in because it is believed we cannot mingle with royalty. And such things do have a negative effect on how we are received in society (VI Participant C, In-Depth Individual Interview).

Some people still have weird beliefs regarding disability, and this is worse when it comes to blindness. It's like the blindness is contagious and will rub-off onto them like a curse or something when they mingle with a person with blindness. I'm sure in a group of ten people, you can find one or two who hold such beliefs and they will treat you as such (VI Participant F, Focus Group Discussion).

Interviews with employers also reveal that their discomfort with hiring people with visual impairment came from the PVI's low level of independent living and mobility skills. Employers believe that having a PVI in the workforce would actually take away from the much needed focus of other employees as they would be required to assist the PVI from time to time.

Some work places possess dangerous machines while others require a high level of mobility. It was reported that this has added to the negative attitude that actual and potential employers held towards hiring PVI. The following extract from an interview with an employer who also specialises in training PVI on braille, independent living, mobility and other skills buttresses this point.

...I must admit that no matter what level of training one receives, they will need to be assisted at some point. Let me take for instance the one we have here. Although she does the tables and dishes as good as anyone, she does need assistance from someone who can see to ascertain that everything is perfect. So I guess I can say their independent living skills at work are good. But of course there is a limit to that (Participant J-Employer, In-Depth Individual Interview).

4.2. Lack of skills and qualifications

Through interviews with PVI it was revealed that apart from the negative attitude which barred them from getting employed, their lack of skills and qualifications for specific jobs was also a factor in their failure to secure employment. It was found that only one PVI amongst the participants in this study was training for a professional qualification and notably in advanced age. A few other participants had trained only as switchboard operators, a skill that has since become redundant as receptionists are expected to do more than just receive and redirect calls into a company. Therefore, it was revealed that besides the disability that they carry, PVI do not offer the qualifications and skills that the job market demands. The following verbal quotes validate the issues raised above:

Well, most of the time the main problem for us is lack of education. You cannot expect people to employ you when you are not educated enough. And getting education for us is another challenge, as you can see I completed high school in 1995 but I'm only getting a chance to train to be a teacher now... so many years later (VI Participant G, Focus Group Discussion).

Another participant said the following when probed on the issue of skills and education among PVI:

Yes, that also is our problem. Most of the time you find that we are not well educated to compete with other people. You cannot exactly find fault with the employer for not hiring you if you do not have the right qualifications (VI Participant C, In-Depth Individual Interview).

When PVI were interviewed on this point, it was revealed that potential employers knew that PVI do not enjoy the right education and skills training, and often used it as cover-up for the negative attitude that they have towards employing people with disabilities. A participant who was part of the executive of one of the organisations for PVI in Eswatini had this to say:

I remember when we approached the then minister for Labour and Social Security, and we were complaining that our employment rate was too low. He simply told us to bring the people so that government employs them. He knew that we could not do that because the people we were advocating for are not educated enough to qualify for such employment. And that was quite embarrassing (VI Participant A, In-Depth Individual Interview).

A further probe by the researchers revealed that lack of special schools and training facilities designed and equipped to educate and train people with visual impairment was also seen as a major problem. Participants lamented the poor learning conditions in public schools that are supposed to be inclusive, but without basic requirement for children with disabilities.

I understand that the government still fails to build proper training facilities with the right equipment for blind people in the inclusive pilot schools. We are expected to go to the same schools and colleges with people who can see, yet the materials that we need to learn is not there. So most of the time we fail school. This means that we will never be able to compete for the same job opportunities with normally sighted people. The truth is that the schools do not adequately prepare for us. We go there as visitors. Hence, we are not adequately skilled (VI Participant D, Focus Group Discussion).

V. Discussions

This study finds that people with visual impairment (PVI) have barriers that may be placed into two broad categories; person-centred issues and environmental issues. At a personal level, it is found that access to employment for PVI is hindered mainly by lack of job related training and relevant qualifications. PVI seek and engage in non-professional jobs because they either have redundant qualifications such as telephone operator's certificate or do not have any formal training at all.

This is consistent with the findings of Oliveira, Shimano and Pereira (2017) who reported that PVI

had up to eight years of formal school with only ten percent of them found to be literate. Sharaf (2015) made similar findings that lack of access to formal education among PVI was one of the main barriers to employment. This study cites government reluctance to adequately implement inclusive education in main stream schools as the cause for this situation. Inclusion is there on paper but not all the education institutions are well equipped to include learners with visual disabilities. This includes both the human and material resources. Sharaf (2015) reported that even universities were not prepared to train teachers on how to teach students with visual impairments. A similar situation in Eswatini is reported by Adebayo and Ngwenya (2015) where mainstream schools reportedly still struggle with full implementation of inclusive education.

The social model of the Critical Disability Theory which is based on the principles that disability is a social construct, and not the inevitable consequence of impairment agrees with the findings of the study which shows that the schools are not well equipped to include learners with disability. Consequently, a significant number of People with Visual Impairment lack proper education and skills to secure employment in the city of Manzini. Secondly, disability is best characterised as a complex interrelationship between impairment, individual response to impairment and the social environment. In this study, it was revealed that some possible employers underrated PVI. Thirdly, the social disadvantage experienced by people with disability is caused by the physical, institutional and attitudinal environments which fail to meet the needs of people who do not match the social expectation of 'normalcy'. The participants in this study revealed that the physical environments, in the possible work places are not structured in a manner that would include PVI. It was reported that the work environment makes it very difficult for PVI move from one point to the other easily. The researchers heard that perhaps securing employment by people with visual impairment is hampered by the physical, institutional and the attitudinal environments of the possible work places of people with visual impairment in Eswatini. That becomes an employment barrier in lives of this group of people.

Another observation from the present study is that the attitude of the employers, other employees and the society towards the PVI form another barrier for PVI to seek and maintain employment. Papakostantinou and Papadopoulos (2018) made a similar observation in Greece. They regard the productivity of PVI as very low. The employers interviewed in the current

study were concerned with the PVI's inability to adapt to the changes in the job description and the general versatility which often becomes necessary in any work environment. Ravenscroft (2013) agrees that employers' reluctance to employ PVI is mainly caused by their generally low levels of independent living and mobility skills which necessitate the use of human help in the workplaces.

For a visually impaired child, independent living and mobility skills are better learned early during the childhood age just as normally sighted children learn basic living skills as they grow up. These are imparted by family members with positive attitude and love to the child. Lack of mobility and independent living skills that employers complain about when the PVI reach employable age is partly due to negative family attitude and neglect during childhood. Inclusion should start at home and not at school.

The negative attitude from employers is a result of the belief that there is very little that a PVI can do successfully and the influence of Swati traditional mythology. A certain section of Swati traditionalists, just as is the case in other African communities, still holds onto the ancient belief that disability, particularly blindness, cannot be allowed to mingle with royalty or is some form of a curse. Although this may sound peripheral and unlikely to exist in a twenty first century society, participants in this study revealed that PVI still experience discrimination based on such myths. The CDT embraces legal rights as an indispensable tool to advance the equality claims of disabled people and to promote their full integration into all aspects of their society while at the same time valuing and welcoming the diversity that people with a disability bring to their communities.

Gyamfi (2020) confirms that beliefs in certain African cultures perpetrate the negative attitude towards people with blindness and low vision. This complicates an already bad situation for the PVI because such beliefs and attitude diminish their chances of getting employment even if they have appropriate qualifications. The same beliefs are shared in most African communities; Eswatini is no exception.

VI. Conclusions

6.1. The study concludes that people with visual impairment in Manzini city are faced with both structural and individual barriers to employment which need to be properly identified and dealt with in order to afford them an equitable chance to participate in the labour market.

6.2. The study concludes that the most conspicuous barrier that PVI have in seeking and maintaining employment is people's negative attitude. Other barriers may be considered secondary in limiting the PVI's chances of securing employment. Both the academic and employment institutions are not adequately prepared to accommodate (include) these people.

6.3. The absence of qualifications and poor independent living and mobility skills have also been identified as employment barriers for people with visual impairment. The researchers conclude that these two are also partly caused by denial and neglect by family during the early developmental stages of the PVI. The neglect and negative attitude that the society holds towards PVI is partly the reason why there seems to be less willingness to afford them with proper education and training opportunities that the normally sighted members of society get.

6.4. The study noted that although the country has embraced inclusion as a principle, society is still far from effectively practising it. Inclusion should start from home, through the school to the work place.

VII. Recommendations

7.1. Inclusive schools should be established and these should be equipped with the necessary equipment, provisions and human resource to cater for the special educational needs of the learners with blindness and low vision.

7.2. The study also recommends that the curriculum in inclusive schools should cater for the special needs of visually impaired learners. This curriculum should include special training on independent living and mobility skills that the PVI may need when at work.

7.3. Teacher training colleges and universities in the country must design training programmes that will produce and empower teachers with the required specialist skills for teaching learners with blindness and low vision.

7.4. Inclusive education for PVI must be fully sponsored by the Eswatini National Government to improve access to education and eliminate the effects of poverty on affordability of specialised educational institutions.

7.5. It is recommended that there must be an on-going public education on visual impairment to dispel myths and misconceptions which have

been found to contribute to the stigmatization and discrimination of PVI, especially in the labour market.

- 7.6. The community should be educated to freely accommodate people with disability. Inclusion should start in the home before it is taken to school.

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