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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ATTITUDES OF THE SIGHTED ON THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED IN ADDIS ABABA

CCRDA

BY

ETENESH WONDMAGEGNEHU

June 2002
Addis Ababa

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A Thesis submitted to the school of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Special Needs Education in Addis Ababa University.

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ACRONYMS

FGDs ------ Focus group discussion

Gos. --------Government Organizations

ENAB------ Ethiopian National Association of the Blind

MOLSA ----Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

NGOs -------Non-Governmental Organizations

CBOs------- Community Based Organizations

SRBH------- Societies for Rehabilitation of the Blind and Handicapped

PWDs------- Persons With Disabilities

UNICEF ----United Nations Children's Fund

VI----------Visually/Vision Impaired

CSA-------- -Central Statistics Authority

SPSS--------Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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Abstract

This research undertaking focuses on investigating attitudinal reactions of sighted communities toward the education, employment and marriage of persons with vision impairment. Using the data collection instruments developed and rapport established with the sighted persons living in the study areas, persons with vision impairment and key informants, particular attention was paid to generate information on the positive and negative reactions of the social environment; the challenges visually impaired people encounter in their struggle for the fulfillment of their wishes, aspirations and life goals.

In the study 400 (200 male and 200 female) sighted persons, 20 (8 male and 12 female) sighted persons gender specific focus group, 24 (12 men and 12 women) persons having vision impairment gender specific focus group living in Woreda 11 kebele 23; and 17(9 male and 8 female) persons with vision impairment gender specific focus group discussion participants at ENAB and 8 key informants participated.

Both close and open-ended questions, focus group discussion outlines and a three-point attitude scale questionnaire on the topics of education, employment and marriage were employed. A total of 60 points/items (20 items on each category) were included where participants of the study were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement, uncertainty and disagreement about the statements made. The information obtained, although there prevailed an inconsistent and mixed attitudes, the findings revealed that the unwelcoming social environment significantly hampers access to various opportunities.

As mentioned above the study aims at revealing the perceived factors by the sighted in the integration and access to opportunities for persons with vision impairment as regards to education, employment and marriage. The data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using percentages. This again was supplemented with

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the focus group discussion results, responses of attitude scales and information obtained from key informants.

The findings of the study revealed that prevalence of unwelcoming social reactions toward the persons with vision impairment have inhibited their effort to benefit from the fruits of education, in their desire to gainfully employed, lead an independent and start marriage life. Access to education is very limited because of a number of reasons i.e. poverty, absence of schools, lack of appropriate support from regular schools, preference of families to send non-disabled to disabled and the value families attach to the education of the female child with vision impairment and male child with similar problem. The study revealed that families and society at large consider the education of female children with vision impairment less important than male siblings. Those girls having vision impairment who manage to join schools fail to pursue largely because of teenage pregnancy, as they are vulnerable for sexual abuse. For fear of abuses and endangering themselves, the socialization process is restrictive and does not encourage their participation in matters concerning their current and future lives. The problems associated with the education of persons with vision impairment are shown in the study.

The study revealed employment opportunities for persons with vision impairment for various reasons are very low in the labor market. As regard to marriage of persons with vision impairment the findings revealed that women are considered asexual, unable to discharge the home management and motherhood responsibilities and unable to equally participate to generate to the household income. Finding a marriage partner for women with visual impairment is very difficult because of such preconceived notions.

On the basis of the findings some suggestions are forwarded to help different actors in order to bring about improvements in the live situations of the visually impaired with special emphasis to their education, employment and marriage life.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

An assessment of the attitudes of sighted persons toward the education, employment and marriage opportunities of the visually impaired and problems surrounding these areas plays a pivotal role in enhancing the integration process and observance of the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities adopted by the UN General Assembly (48th session, 1993). Persons with vision impairment can be broadly classified along the range of dependence or independence. Some require support to perform routine activities. Others attempt to integrate in the world of the sighted without significant reliance on other sighted persons.

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Various studies indicate that adverse attitudinal environment makes it difficult for persons with disabilities/visually impaired to lead a normal life. This is mainly reflected in the attitude of the community and co-residents, for that matter, mainly because of the preconceived negative notions against such people or disability. As a result of such attitude many children, youth and adults with vision impairment are denied of their basic rights despite the international rules and national laws advocating for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in general and persons with vision impairment in particular.

Sighted people consider blindness as a disability that makes it difficult to lead normal life. The visually impaired, therefore, is faced with problems, apart from adjusting with the loss

of sight, of coping with the implicit and explicit reactions of the public to his/her disability. Persons with disabilities in general and those with visual impairment in particular do have needs, aspirations, expectations and success in life like that of their peers with no disabilities.

In all societies every member aspires to have some possessions, improved life situations or success in life and independence. People attach high value to these possessions; and children, youth and the adult are socialized to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and opportunities to achieve success in life. Every person with or without vision impairment shares the same world of aspirations and competition. The fulfilment of basic needs/rights, interests, aspirations and life goals provides the person contentment. The person receives a place in society as a member in good standing. Tirussew (1995:19) stated "Like other people, persons with disabilities can be comfortable and secure when they feel that they are accepted, appreciated and liked".

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Education is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities. It is a means through which a person fulfils his or her most essential needs and intentions, which are generally defined as life aims or aspirations. The visually impaired persons require dependable and realistic information about education, training or vocational opportunities and appropriate support like that of the sighted, which can lead them to independence. Crawford (1966) noted that the provision of dependable information for the visually impaired, about the long lasting benefits of education, vocational opportunities and other

prerequisites is essential to help them to be competitive in the labour market and the world of work.

Good education and vocational training play significant roles for career development. It is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills and change in attitudes through releasing realizing potentials. However, obtaining education is one of the challenges in life especially in the developing world where resources are very meager and where the value attached to education by each individual differs very much. The challenge to get education becomes very difficult especially for persons with disabilities. Among school age children only 2 percent in developing countries have any form of rehabilitation assistance or education (Bright Hope Bulletin No.4, 2001: 37).

Securing of employment that will ensure sustainable income is one of the factors that bring happiness in life. People strive to secure jobs. Every young person expects to be employed after achieving a certain level of education or training. Usually an individual secures employment when she or he is found to be competent enough in performing the tasks to be assigned to him or her. Education and training play significant part in adequately performing a job. Persons with vision impairment as a social category should have a fair share of employment opportunities. Persons with vision impairment can only compete in the labour market and perform the job to be assigned to them provided they have gone to school and trained. But the issue here is "Do the sighted people believe that

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persons with vision impairment even if they have the skill are capable of performing the jobs assigned to them? The other side of the coin is how many of them are skilled?"

At marriageable age people aspire to establish a family. Almost every member of society attaches high value to marriage. Within a family life quite a number of psychological and physical needs and expectations are met. People think and believe that marriage life gives comfort, pleasure and security (Groves et al., 1953:249). It satisfies one's need of love, and warmth; protects from loneliness, increases maturity, (Ibid, 247-248; Krystina, 1995:207).

As human beings persons with visual impairment want to love and to be loved, aspire to experience sex and want to conclude marriage. However, the fulfillment of the desires of persons with vision impairment in engaging in marriage is dependent on several factors, which includes, among others, the attitude of the sighted people towards them. Whenever people want to establish relations with opposite sexes physical appearance seem to have pulling or repelling power. According to Groves (1953:235) physical attraction and love are necessary for enduring and satisfying marriage relations. However, physical or other type of disabilities often times arouse fear, refusal and avoidance among people as appearance is tallied with capability, activity and success (Murphy, cited in Ingstad & Whyte, p.137)". And as such persons with disabilities find it difficult to engage in marriage and fail to benefit what is considered to be positive from family life.

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Prejudice and stereotyping stigma are considered to be the main factors for this as many people consider the persons with visual impairment as an invalid and asexual. To challenge the negative attitude of the society persons with vision impairment have to be competitive and successful in life, and for this they have to have education, skill and employment. To have this access, the attitude of the sighted member of the society at various levels has to be supporting. Therefore, the review of attitudes of sighted persons is believed to contribute to the current efforts being made at all levels to improve the situation of persons with disabilities in general and the visually impaired in particular to help them socially integrate and lead independent life.

1.1. Background

Disability has been understood with varying misconceptions to-date in many societies. For many years it has been perceived with evil spirit or possession with a demon as a result of which persons with disabilities deemed to suffer the persistent rejection and neglect even by their closest relatives.

Situations become particularly difficult for people who have visual impairment who often face with many barriers (e.g. physical and social) in their attempt to meet their aspirations. Many of the barriers, result from the improper attitude of their social environment. Such attitudes have strong impact on the social consciousness and lead to further discriminating tendencies. The stereotyping and labeling of people with

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disabilities make them feel different, odd and some times even worthless comparing themselves with the rest of the society (Krystina, 1995: 204.)

Gabriel Farrell noted three ways in which attitudes toward the visually impaired are observed:

- Non-acceptance, which isolates the visually impaired from social contacts with the sighted community;
- Considering the persons with visual impairment as helpless and incapable of performing the tasks required for day to day living; and
- Believing that the sighted must assist the visually impaired poor " without distinguishing those blind persons who may not need their help or those areas in which help is not acceptable (cited by Lukoff, 1970:19)".

Various studies indicate that adverse attitudinal environment makes it difficult for the persons with visual impairment to lead a normal life. This is mainly reflected in the attitude of the community and co-residents for that matter, mainly because of the preconceived negative notions against such people or disability. Gowman (cited by Lukoff 1970) suggested that "...stereotypes directed toward blind persons profoundly affect their responses to themselves...Not only the stereotype is potent factor in blocking opportunities for reciprocal relations, but it tends to sharply distort blinded individuals definition of self and situation". Persons with visual impairment face very stringent responses that put them apart from the rest of the social environment. Often times the

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segregation of children with vision impairment from the community starts from their early age when parents, after knowing much cannot be done to reverse the sight, push their children with visual impairment to segregated schools. When the children are pushed to the special schools the relationship of the children and their families is cut at an early age (Lukoff, 1970: 3).

As noted by Daniel (2000:1), adult persons with disabilities used to be placed in special institutions, detached from their communities "for medical, educational, vocational and other related services". These sorts of arrangements used to be made based on the belief that they are physically different and should require special services. Chappell (cited by Daniel, 1994:419) indicated that isolation of persons with disabilities in institutional settings underpin stigmatisation.

In order to help the integration of people with visual impairment, it is imperative to closely observe the attitude of the sighted. It was against this background that this study has been initiated. The study is designed to identify and elaborate on the attitudes of the sighted members of the society towards the education, employment and marriage of people with visual impairment.

Tangible information indicating the extent, magnitude and level of attitudinal problems and needs of persons with visual impairment are considered as the pre-conditions for the creation of awareness, influencing policies and provision of subsequent services. The

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findings of this study are believed to give an insight on current barriers of social contact, serve as instrument of advocacy to influence policy and encourage others to make further in depth studies whose results would serve for initiating and influencing program planning and decision making.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Studying the attitude of the society towards persons with visual impairment can play an important role in order to design and implement different intervention strategies. There are declarations and legal provisions that claim to provide equal opportunities to participate in the life of the society for persons with disabilities in general and persons with visual impairment in particular. However, the practice seems to be to the contrary. As many studies indicate that visually impaired persons in general and visually impaired women in particular are considered useless, helpless, and unable to be self-sufficient, hence, neglected and stigmatised. According to Ingstad & Whyte (1995) "the perception of the visually impaired as useless implies that they are often regarded as the most helpless and unable to help themselves". From this explanation it can be understood that studying the attitudes of the sighted towards visually impaired persons in relation to their education, employment and marriage is important for the improvement of their integration and to help them lead independent life.

The researcher believes that the study will:

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a. help to have insight about the societal attitude (positive and negative) on education, employment and marriage of people with visual impairment;

b. help to design possible strategies for interventions on the basis of the findings; and

c. serve as a basis for further studies on attitudes.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The attitude of the society is an important issue that promotes the integration of persons with disabilities in general and the visually impaired in particular. Attitudes towards persons with visual impairment are explained in relation to the three components i.e. education, employment and marriage. Our knowledge about visually impaired persons and the subsequent feelings (likes or dislikes) we develop, makes us ready to behave (react) either negatively or positively towards visually impaired persons. The services the visually impaired population receive in a society are determined accordingly.

Society may have misconceptions and wrong beliefs about the visually impaired population, which in turn may lead them to suffer from low societal status and denial of social integration through education, employment and marriage. The prevalence of such misconceptions entails the denial/violation of the basic rights to education, employment and family formation of this section of the society.

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Therefore, assessing the attitude of the community toward the education, employment and marriage of persons with visual impairment is the major issue of this study. In addition, the attitude of the blind community in relation to education, employment and marriage is also studied through focus group discussion. Thus, the central aim of this study is to investigate and assess the attitude of the community towards the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired population based on the following research questions.

1.4. Research Questions

1.4.1. Which of the visually impaired population (male, female) is less favourably perceived in education, employment and marriage? By which group of respondents?

1.4.2. What are the attitudes of the sighted people toward the education, employment, and marriage of the visually impaired?

1.4.3. What are the major factors that influence the selection of female/male partners for marriage in the locality?

1.4.4. Are there differences in the attitude of the educated, employed and married sighted persons towards the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired?

1.4.5. Is there any relationship among the attitudes of the sighted persons on education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired?

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1.4.6. What policies and laws exist in the areas of education, employment and marriage and disabilities in the country? What is the level of their application?

1.4.7. What are the possible strategies to improve the condition of the visually impaired?

1.5. Objective of the study

1.5.1. General objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the attitude of the sighted community on the education, employment, and marriage of the visually impaired in Addis Ababa.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

1.5.1. to obtain relevant information about the attitude of the sighted persons toward the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired;

1.5.2. to assess the relationship between some demographic variables (age, sex, educational level) and attitude of the sighted toward the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired.

1.5.3. to observe the existence and application of policies and laws addressing education, employment, and marriage of the visually impaired in the current situation of Ethiopian context;

1.5.4. to suggest some intervention strategies based on the findings of the study.

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1.6. Definition of key terms

The major concepts in the study are defined as follows:

DISABILITY

A long lasting permanent defect or problem that in some way makes it more difficult for a person with disability to do certain things than for a non-disabled person (David Werner, 1999). In this paper disability means any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform, an activity in the manner or with in the range considered normal for human being (WHO in 1976 as cited by Helander, 1993:17).

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Ysseldyke & Algozzile (1995) states that visual impairment is a problem of seeing, even with correction. The term is used in the study referring to those people with a very low visual functioning and to those who are totally without the sense of vision or totally blind. Vision impairment and visual impairment is used interchangeably in the research.

ATTITUDE

Attitude is a predisposition towards some objects and includes one's beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies concerning the object (Myers, 1983). Thus, in this study, attitude refers to perception, belief, opinion, knowledge, reactions, and behavior of the sighted members of the society towards the visually impaired persons' education, employment and marriage.

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EMPLOYMENT

Employment is any type of gainful work performed or services rendered in exchange for money. (WWW.tc.Colombia. edu/~international/employ/. def.html). For practical purposes according to this study employment means any kind of job that insures sustainable income.

EDUCATION

The act or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge or skills, as for a profession. (Random House Compact UNABRIDGED Dictionary, 1996:621). Education for the purpose of this study defined as instrument that enables persons to acquire knowledge and life long skills to lead independent life.

MARRIAGE

The social institution under which a man and a woman establish their decision to live as husband and wife by legal commitments, religious ceremonies, etc. (Random House Compact UNABRIDGED Dictionary, 1996:1179). Marriage in this study is a socially recognized relationship between a man and a woman.

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1.7. Limitations of the Study

For practical reasons, the study was conducted in one Woreda of Addis Ababa, which was selected as a study site. Even though reasonably large number of subjects was studied, the study area was limited to one Kebele.

Studies made on disability issues locally are very limited. Thus, local literature on attitude toward education, employment and marriage was not generally available.

Therefore, it was difficult to collect sufficient past studies to support the study indicating the Ethiopian situation, especially with respect to education, employment and marriage of persons with vision impairment. Moreover, had there been adequate time and budget, larger number of respondents could have been included in the study, and the study would have been further enriched.

The researcher however feels that the results obtained have reflected the unwelcoming social environment in which the visually impaired are deemed to live. This can serve as a point of departure to do in depth study in the field.

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CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview of the Problem of Disability/Visual Impairment

2.1.1. The Extent of Visual Impairment: Global Overview

Different literature sources indicate that the problem of disability cases worldwide reaches close to 500 million. Disability is a major problem of developing countries as they have the highest proportion of persons with disabilities. Estimates put that 80 per cent of the world's populations with disabilities live in developing countries (Radda Barnnen, 1998). According to the WHO estimate about 150 million of these people are children and 120 million of them live in developing countries. O'Toole (as cited by Daniel, 1991:7) reported that unless the current poverty situation is not reversed; ignorance and superstition continue to have an overriding power in the beliefs of the population, the figure in these developing countries will rise to four-fifth.

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In the absence of tangible data it is very difficult to determine the global prevalence of blindness. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are about 38 million blind people worldwide and about 110 million people suffer from low vision (Encarta Encyclopaedia, 2001). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) about 80 per cent of the blind population live in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America (cited

by Campbell, BJVI Home page, 1996). In addition to the adventitiously blinded people, in spite of the tremendous advances made in the areas of medicines and technology, which is believed to be capable of preventing the incidences of visual impairment, the demographic figures indicate that there are three significant groups that are rapidly increasing visually impaired population (Campbell, 1996). These are individuals with low vision, persons with multiple disabilities and the elderly visually impaired. Preventable or curable diseases are usually causing visual impairment in the developing countries. As a result of deficiency in vitamin "A" more than 250,000 children become partially or totally blind every year.

Only below 10 per cent of these people have access to any form of rehabilitation services. These figures, combined with over crowdedness of the world population growth and the depletion of resources indicate that the life situation of the visually impaired will deteriorate. The shortage of services rendered to persons with disabilities in general and the visually impaired in particular as compared to the non-disabled and the wide spread negative attitudes of the public called for diverse measures in different societies worldwide although the impacts made are not dramatic especially in the developing countries.

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2.1.2. Prevalence and Incidence of Visual Impairment in Ethiopia

According to a research report of Save the Children Sweden, (1998:1) "The status of person's with disability in Ethiopia is even more tragic and severe." As put by Johnson,

(1993,cited by Daniel) it is essential to relate the problem of disability to the vicious circle of poverty where inadequate nutritional food intake will cause poor health situations and thereby resulting in disability. Coleridge (`1993: 64) concerning the prevalence of impairment, noted that it is not only a function of poverty, and is not restricted to poor people rather all strata of the society is affected. The causes of disabilities, among others, include infections diseases, complications during delivery, malnutrition, harmful traditional practices that affect the health of children, improper handling and childcare practices (Radda Barnen, 1998:1). The available data regarding, prevalence, extent and the profile of persons with disabilities do not indicate the real picture, as no comprehensive studies have been done so far. The available data are based on findings of snap surveys or short studies.

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As indicated by ENAB (2001) "Three local surveys, one local baseline survey and a national census were conducted from 1979-1995. The figures obtained were suspiciously low as compared to the 10% estimation of WHO for countries like Ethiopia".

The 1984 Population & Housing Census of Ethiopia revealed that there were 1,244,881 persons with disabilities in the country. The census indicated visual impairment as the highest (42.7 per cent) category followed by unspecified category of persons with minor or multiple disabilities (24.7 per cent) and motor disorder, which is 14.4 per cent. UNICEF's Report (1990, cited by Tirussew) indicated that close to 42 per cent of the persons with disabilities suffered from total or partial visual impairment. The findings of

2.2. The Concept of Attitude and the Attitude of the Sighted toward Visual Impairment

2.2.1. The concept of Attitude

Attitudes are beliefs, which influence people to react in a positive, negative, or ambivalent way to a person, object, or idea (Encarta Encyclopaedia, 2001). An attitude is a point of view of an individual toward people usually based on *stereotypes.* According to Aggarwal (1998:298) "An Attitude is learnt… it is adopted"

2.2.2. Attitudes Toward Visual Impairment: Historical overview

Different literature sources provide us with inconsistent cross-cultural attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Some indicate the role-played by religion in influencing community attitudes and the well being of families with a disability(Selway et al, 1998: 429). Monbeck (1973) reported that many hospices and cloisters were run for the relief of blind people and other persons with disabilities during the 4th century (cited by Selway, 1998:431). The provision of support to persons with visual impairment was considered as the special responsibility of the church on the basis of the Christian ideals of charity.

Dovey & Graffam (1987) noted that they have found evidences of cultural attitudes i.e. in Russia, Central Asia, and the Far East countries, where the social positions of persons with disabilities were neither negative nor positive (cited by Selway, Ibid). In some other cultures being disabled was perceived as a liability. According to Tibebu (1995) the

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"period prior to the late 1700s the fate of persons with disabilities was likely to be a cruel one". For instance, Dovey and Graffam (1987, as cited by Selway), noted that Ancient Spartans used to throw newborn babies with disabilities off cliffs. Northern Salteaux Indians used to shoot persons with disability with arrows and burned their dead bodies since they were considered to be possessed by demon (Ibid). Coleridge (1993) pointed out that in Germany, Martin Luther (1483-1546) has been the proponent of the idea of killing disabled children considering them to be "manifestation of the devil in a living form"(cited by Daniel)".

2.2.3. Attitudes toward Independent Living and Self-Reliance

2.2.3.1. The Challenges of Losing Sight and Independent living

Persons with disabilities suffer a variety of segregation and prejudices where they are excluded from access to educational opportunities, employment, public facilities or any other benefits which the sighted people enjoy the best out of them. The fulfillment of the values important for a given individual is dependent on several factors, which include among others, the adequacy of the intentions in relation to the actual possibilities. The conditions in which a person lives are also important. Often there is a serious discrepancy between aspirations, conditions and possibilities, which cause long-lasting stress to the functioning of an individual (Tomaszewski & et al, 1967, cited by Krystina, P. 203).

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Persons with disabilities used to be perceived in many cultures as sick, hopeless and useless who deserve pity and sympathy from the non-disabled. Dodds explained, "When we turn to literature and drama we find they are replete with negative stereotypes of visually impaired people. We read portrayals of visually impaired as evil and cunning (as in Robert Louis Stevenson's Blind Pen in Treasure Island); helpless, useless and better of dead (as in Kupling's Dick Heldar in The Light that Failed) (1993: 9)". These attitudes are very discouraging. Such attitudes show the way to stereotyping and thereby making a mind set that visually impaired people cannot be competent and lead independent life. With these sorts of attitudes the visually impaired is given a picture of a person who " ... is useless, deserving of pity and of being regarded as an invalid by those sighted people around him ... being blind is a full time occupation in itself (Somerete Maugham, cited by Dodds, 1993:10)". The implied meaning is that people with visual impairment should not be expected to engage themselves in any other activities other than coping with being blind (Ibid).

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Villey noted that this kind of attitude is caused by the isolation and lack of education of the persons with visual impairment. He further explained that the attitudes of sighted persons discouraged persons with visually impaired from attaining independence and a normal pattern of life (cited by Lukoff, 1970:18). Persons with disabilities/, the visually impaired in particular experience a number of odds in life. They are unable to receive good education, or vocational training, unable to compete in the labour market since

opportunities for acquiring skills is in existent, easily pushed out from the jobs for any silly mistakes that may take place. They are also confronted with problems associated with family formation (Tirussew, et.al.1995).

With the influence of religion, rise of philanthropists, the rise of capitalism and the enactment of the Poor Law by Britain's Queen Elizabeth I, the persons with partial and full disabilities were considered as those who are in need of care, support in confined and segregated institutions, and through job placement. As long as resources are allotted to the benefit of persons with disabilities their disabilities could be reduced and lead them to independent life. Education and training, provision of appliance, abolishing physical and social barriers integration in the education, living and work environment would create tremendous improvements in the success of persons with disabilities (Encarta Encyclopaedia, 2001).

It is imperative that the education and rehabilitation process should include to bring about positive change in the minds of the visually impaired and the people whom they are in close contact since they are the ones who can manage to build on the strengths they daily exhibit. The assistance provided should be geared to lead him/her independence. Mobility training is also an important component of the rehabilitation process. They can work in a wide range of professions, like productions, schools, service providing organizations, etc. if they receive appropriate vocational training.

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2.2.3.2. The Participation of Persons with Vision Impairment in matters that affect their lives

Several studies indicate that it is essential to include the victims in the decision-making processes of development planning designed for them so that services could be based on their own needs. As a matter of fact the number of service providing organizations designed for the visually impaired are very few and are unable to address the needs of the overwhelming number of persons with vision impairment. Those people who have had the opportunity to enrol in some of the programs do have complaints over the management of the services, since the services and programs for persons with vision impairment are designed and managed by sighted people. However, the participation of persons with vision impairment is believed to ensure the sustainability and feeling of ownership. This will also give them the opportunity to have control over their lives.

2.2.4. Attitude toward Self: A Factor that Propagates the Unfavourable Societal Attitude

The self-concept is another important factor that activates or retards the effort to demonstrate one's capability of being independent and self-reliant provided potentials are released with the opportunities offered to persons with vision impairment. This relates also to one's courage in causing change in oneself and influencing the social environment. Studies indicate that persons with disabilities have negative attitudes at their own disabilities, i.e. physical difference (Tirussew, 1995:16).

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Once the visually impaired starts feeling that s/he is a hopeless, things become very gloomy to him/her. Considering oneself as " incompetent" entails loss of self-esteem, coupled with feelings of anxiety and depression. The negative attitudes and the society's stereotypes together with the feeling of worthlessness lead to a feeling of hopelessness. Many children either through neglect or through over protection by their parents or guardians live with the burden of the stereotyping.

Experiences working with some persons having vision impairment show that they cannot bear to face this fact and consider that life is not worth living. They become passive. Dodds (1995:2-3) noted that "At the time when you visit them (people with vision impairment) with an offer of rehabilitation they may well have made their minds up that rehabilitation may work for other people, but that in their case, since nothing can be done to restore their sight, then nothing can ease their pain". With such feelings it becomes difficult to cope with the social and psychological consequences. Such feelings erode self-respect, limit initiatives and cultivate a negative self-image of inferiority and uselessness. To combat prejudice against persons with vision impairment, the most dependable method, is to provide them with the necessary education and skills that would help them become productive members of the society.

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2.2.5. Attitude of the sighted toward the Education/Rehabilitation of Persons with Vision Impairment

2.2.5.1. Provision of Education

Even though many countries have laws and policies that require communities to provide education to all children regardless of their handicaps, many children are out of school. Some are being provided with substandard education. Some are left out of school mainly because of the absence of adequate school where they could be enrolled or at times children with severe disability may not be considered to be fit into the educational program (Kozloff, 1979: 1). Often times families who have no sustainable income tend not to or hesitate to invest in the education of their children with disabilities. Education is a principal instrument for preparing children and the adult for a better life during the latter years. It is doubtful to expect that any child, let alone the visually impaired, can be successful in life if she/he is denied of access to education. As a result of such attitude many children, youth and adults with disabilities are denied of their basic rights despite the existence of international rules and national laws advocating for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The 1988 UNESCO survey, as cited in Institute of Educational Research study (2001:19) out of 52 developing countries 32 had less than 1% of school age children enrolled in special education programs. Only 3 out of 200 children who are blind, deaf or mentally retarded were receiving special education. Further UNESCO study shows that the

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enrollment of children with disabilities in Southern and Eastern African countries is very low, ranging with a high of 0.8 per cent in Mauritius to a low of 0.06 per cent in Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia the visually impaired are provided educational services in 4 special boarding schools, one special day school, 23 special classes. Considering the educational participation of the visually impaired in the academic year 1999 there were 1488 visually impaired i.e. 870 males and 618 females (MOLSA.1999). As indicated by one study in the year 1996/97 academic years, a total of 52 special classes were opened and 1,296 children with disabilities (visual, hearing and mental) were integrated into regular school (Amare Asgdom. et. al. 2001). In Addis Ababa in the academic year 1993/94 E.C there are 238 visually impaired i.e.173 male and 65 female students in different Government Educational Institutions (2002). Out of this in different High Schools in Addis Ababa there are 82 men and 36 female impaired students from grade 9 and 12, in Kotebe Teachers Training there are 16 visually impaired men and 17 visually impaired female teacher trainees, and in Addis Ababa University there are 75 male visually impaired students and 12 visually impaired female students from 1st year to 4 year education. The participation of the visually impaired females in the social life is very limited. A closer look at the higher education of visually impaired females from 1957 to 1992 E.C there were 65 diploma and 24 degree graduates while this number was 187 and 157 for visually impaired males and females respectively (ENAB, 2001). Kasahun Yibeltal (2000) in his study indicated out of the 5 Special Schools for the visually impaired, in 4 of them namely Shashemene, Wolayita, Bako and Sebeta there were 130 male and 108 female visually impaired students.

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According to the Standard Rules adopted by the UN General Assembly, States are obliged to recognize the principle of primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings (UN, 1994: 23). The Standard Rules emphasize that countries should give special emphasis in addressing educational needs of young preschool age children and adults with disabilities (UN 1994:24). The main purpose of rehabilitation is to enable a person with disability/visual impairment to be able to live a life, which is similar to that of the able-bodied persons.

2.2.5.2. The challenges of Inclusive Measures

In the USA the Amendments to the elementary and secondary education Act in 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1974 created far better educational and rehabilitation rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities (Schmid et. al. 1983: 42 – 43). " The Public Law 94 – 142 which was enacted in 1975 guaranteed free public education to all children with disabilities (ibid). This federal law was reenacted in 1990. It ensures the provision of free and appropriate publication education (Encarta Encyclopedia 2001), to all children with disabilities. In the US the successively enacted laws and court decisions have played significant roles in ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities in general and the visually impaired in particular. Norman noted "In education, federal law now guarantees a free appropriate public education to all disabled children, regardless of the severity of their condition (Encarta Encyclopedia, 2001).

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Changes in attitudes and better understanding of the creation of education access to visually impaired children and adults are becoming widespread in many countries. However, such beliefs are not accompanied with practical deeds. Inclusion, which is the process of allowing children to equally participate in regular classroom activities regardless of disability, was promoted since the 1980s. Its need is momentarily growing worldwide. This has brought about increased "...awareness among legislators and educators that separating children with disabilities from children without disabilities constitutes unequal education (ibid)". With the technological advancement being made in the teaching-learning process where, Braille is now being automated and printed using special typewriters and word processors, machines that translate Braille into speech and audiotape recordings are making much more easier for the visually impaired to attend in regular school although these facilities cannot easily be accessed by the great majority of persons with vision impairment in the developing world.

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However, there are concerns and challenges to this approach. Some teachers and parents express their worry in that " inclusion slows educational progress both for students with disabilities and for their non-disabled peers (Encarta Encyclopedia: 2001)". It is essential that teachers, parents and those who work for and with children having vision impairment should assist and stimulate them to be competitive in life. The challenge is that many teachers lack the necessary training and experience to readily know the needs of individuals with vision impairment.

In the developing countries absence of adequate education opportunities, improved facilities, the persistent stereotypes, lack of empowering best practices and the lack of sustained awareness that would influence policy become the causes for the sector of the population to continue being poorer and illiterate.

2.2.6. Attitude of the Sighted toward the Employment of Persons With Vision Impairment

Persons with vision impairment do have needs, aspirations, expectations and success in life like that of their peers having no disabilities starting from childhood and beyond. The visually impaired, like that of the sighted require dependable and realistic information for their career development. They want to know more about available opportunities of formal education, training or vocational opportunities, employment and appropriate support, which can help them to be independent. Crawford (1966) noted that the provision of dependable information for the visually impaired, as it is true to the sighted, about the long lasting benefits of education, vocational opportunities and other prerequisites to be competitive in the labour market and the world of work will help them decide their career.

According to Crawford (1966:xv) " In the broad sense, careers encompass the way of life that includes employment, family relationship, social and community activities and the fulfilment of personal ambitions and goals...." Career can be planned and developed through out the life of an individual starting from childhood through the time of giving up work. Career development incorporates "such important factors as education,

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occupational development and growth, marriage and the raising of children, and participation in civic and community activities (Crawford, 1966: 3)".

In the developing world the proportion of the population with disabilities is significantly high and are living in conditions of poverty and deprivation. "Persons with disabilities in general and women with disabilities in particular often find themselves unemployed, under employed or in low paying jobs (Driedger, 2001: 9)". The main reasons for the high rate of unemployment of persons with disabilities are that employers presume that people with disabilities are not capable of working and therefore, do not allow them to be employed. This is again exacerbated with the lack of adequate resource and access to education and training opportunities, and most important the absence of supportive legislation and policies. Such problems hinder the employment of persons with disabilities, earning income, leading their own independent life, supporting their own families and contribute to the development of the national economy.

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The World Program of Action (1982) for "The Right of Persons with Disabilities to the same opportunities as other citizens and to an equal share in the improvements in living conditions resulting from economic and social development (UN 1994: 6) adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution 37/52, Dec 3, 1982, became an instrument for promoting widespread activities in empowering persons with disabilities. Among other things, the standard rules (adopted by the UN in 1994) " on the Equalization opportunities for persons with Disabilities" also emphatically reminded that States should give due

consideration so that persons with disabilities in general and visually impaired in particular can secure employment.

Based on the principles enshrined in the ILO Convention 159 concerning vocational rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) and other ILO conventions concerning equal opportunities, ILO disability Program promotes decent work for women and men and to overcome the obstacles preventing persons with disabilities from full participation in the labour market. The convention stresses that vocational guidance, vocational training and employment and placement services should be provided by making the necessary adaptations so that they can fit local situations. It also stresses the importance of creating opportunities on the open labour market. The Convention also encourages member countries to support for the establishment of various types of sheltered employment for persons with vision impairment for whom the creation of access for open employment cannot be readily practiced.

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As a result of the international pressures and in response to local pressure groups many governments have introduced legislation, policies and developed national action plans to promote opportunities for persons with disabilities/visually impaired seeking employment. However, as many as 80 per cent of persons with disabilities seeking jobs are unemployed in some countries (ILO, website: 2000). Many women with disabilities are left at the periphery of the labour market and society is not benefiting from their talents and potentials due to lack of education. Women have traditionally accepted roles

and as such, they are less encouraged to go to schools (Driedger, 2001:9). Women with disabilities including with vision impairment find themselves unemployed, under employed or in low paying jobs.

Approaches to rehabilitate the visually impaired were developed in the 50s and 60's in North America and Europe for that matter following World War II where the visually impaired veterans were assisted. The main focus was to establish rehabilitation centres providing counselling, vocational training, mobility training, and placement in workshops. According to Campbell (1996) many of these approaches had success stories especially in capacitating the visually impaired for independent living. These approaches were later replicated in the closing years of the 50s and the early 60s to the developing countries. However, their successes have been limited to address the needs of a very small number of people to achieve independence.

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The end of the 60s introduced the Community -Based Rehabilitation where clients were given while they are in their own communities assisted by community-based workers. In the developing countries non-profit making or charitable organizations run many of these programs. The participation of the concerned government organizations in the areas of education, rehabilitation and training designed for the visually impaired is very limited. And as such roughly 90 per cent of visually impaired people have no access to basic rehabilitation programs (Campbell, 1996). The main reasons are attributed to the absence of services in the rural communities, where the few existing one's are concentrated in

major cities of the countries in the developing world. Coupled with this is the lack of the participation of the visually impaired in the planning and implementation process. In Addition to this since man of the training programs are not initiated on the expressed needs of the individual targets, their outcomes have been unsatisfactory and could not enrol as many people as possible.

Driedger (2001) noted that the public standing of persons with disabilities worldwide is that they are at the "bottom of the barrel" in society. Conversely, Charles Wheller appealed in his study (as cited by Dodds 1993, P: 12) "... blind people are first and foremost individuals in their own right)". Some of the prejudices, and stereotype images nowadays, are being fought and certain measures of integration of persons with visual impairment into society are being taken although the pace is not dramatic as changing attitudes is a time taking process. However, Australia, North America, Western Europe and Japan are changing the whole image through equalization of opportunities in the areas of education and employment, and social security schemes (Driedger).

As indicated by Ministry of Labour and Social and Affaires "unemployment is a socio economic problem that affects all sections of the society, it is almost aggravated on persons with disabilities (MOLSA, 1999:25)". Taking this into account the Ethiopian Government has issued Proclamation No.101/1994 in August 1994, concerning the rights of persons with disabilities employment. However, it has become difficult to enforce this

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proclamation since it lacks regulations and directives for implementation (MOLSA, 1999:25).

2.2.7. Attitudes toward of the sighted the Marriage of Persons with Visual Impairment

Marriage, the raising of children and establishing an independent household, is one of the major goals in adult life. Every adult expects to have his/her own home and establish a family and raise children. Crawford (1996: 6) noted " The choice of a wife or husband" is the first move that an adult makes toward establishing a family. "--- home is the place where mankind turns for love, understanding comfort, and relaxation. Procreation is one of the social functions and results of marriage life. Many people want to get married with the aim of having children (Ibid)".

In the ancient times persons with disabilities were not allowed to engage in marriage. According to Longemore (1987, cited by Daniel) Darwin's philosophy did not entertain any kind of intervention to improve the lives of these people since they were considered as imperfect, unfit and not allowed to procreate. They were prevented from concluding marriage on the ground that they should not propagate their imperfection (cited by Daniel, 2000:20). Such persons were not allowed to marry, to have children, to vote, and they were denied protection against discrimination. As a result they were segregated and restricted in their rights and opportunities. Helen Keller (cited by Dodds, 1993: 4) said "... blindness itself was not the primary handicap, rather the attitudes of sighted people towards the blind".

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Adolescents with disabilities, just like the non-disabled, do have wants love and to be loved, sexual desires and experience sexuality, engage in marriage and to experience parenthood. As cited by Boylan (1991) different literature resources indicate that non-disabled persons consider women with disabilities as asexual. Women with disabilities have greater difficulties finding marriage partner than non-disabled women or disabled men. According to Kent (as cited by Boylan, 1991:14) " Marriage is the ultimate goal for unmarried woman in most works, to be single is to be an old maid - economically dependent, socially ostracized and emotionally unfulfilled".

Mates or for that matter potential marriage partners doubt the competence of the visually impaired women to tend to a family. Often times the man feels that his public standing will be diminished if he goes for a marriage partner with visual impairment. Therefore, marriage opportunities of the visually impaired girls seem to be low because of fear of being not accepted by the community on the part of the man seeking to get married.

The main reasons for this especially in the Ethiopian situation are that marriage is concluded through arrangements made by parents. The women with disability may not be in a position to meet the requirement. Often times one of the requirements is that wives are expected to equally generate income to the family, which is usually gained through hard work. That can be one disqualifying factor. Secondly, people fear that the presence of a person with disability in the family may bring misfortune (Boylan, 1991:55).

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Ingstad & Whyte explain that within the Kenya Masai "disabled people are as far as possible integrated in the daily routine homestead, and the community. Masai do not stigmatize people who have a disability. Physically impaired persons marry, become parents, and participate in all communal activities to the best of their abilities"(Ingstad & Whyte, 1995: 69).

According to Robert Murphy with respect to establishing relations with opposite sexes physical differences often times arouse fear, evasion or avoidance and refusal as it is computed with specific ideals of attractiveness, agility, activity, capability and success (cited by Ingstad & Whyte, 1995:137). Groves (1953) noted, "Physical attraction and love are essential prerequisites for a sustained and satisfying marriage." Good home management skills, agility, perseverance in life and sociability are considered by many people much more important qualities than physical appearance for attraction between opposite sexes and founding of a family.

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Sentumbwe stating about the sexual and marital opportunities of visually impaired women in a sample survey among education/ rehabilitation participants conducted in Uganda said "most blind people in education or rehabilitation programs expect to lead lives that are not dissimilar to those of their educated sighted kin and peers, including marriage and child bearing (as cited by Ingstad & Whyte, 1995: 159)". Sentumbwe further argues that gender roles, especially expectations about the role of wife, mean that blindness is a greater handicap for women than for men. Husbands want their wives to equally

participate in the social and economic life of the family. Short of this disqualifies them to be chosen as partners. Sentumbwe, also found out that the sexual and marital experience of visually impaired educated women in Uganda was not that similar to that of men. Women can have sighted lovers, but they opted to conclude marriage with visually impaired males, while visually impaired educated men prefer sighted spouses.

Many daughters with visual impairment are left and confined at home. Often times parents protect their visually impaired daughters for fear of abuse and out of sympathy, and discourage them to participate from household chores on the grounds that they may cause damage or hurt themselves. However, knowingly or unknowingly the socialization process of transforming of the girls to establish a family and become responsible marriage partners is being curtailed. Women with disabilities do also face difficulties be it in experiencing sexual life or concluding marriage. People attach high value to physical appearance without taking account of the true self of the women with disability. Life experience of individuals with vision impairment tells us that although disability may have some kind of effect on the emotions of the victim, it does not kill their sexual feelings. Boylan (1991) emphasizing this says "The disabled woman is often seen from the outset as a victim".

Parents and the society at large usually make fierce objections if an able bodied intends to marry a woman with disability. Studies indicate that husbands abandon their wives if they become disabled on the grounds that she is incapable of carrying out household

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affairs like cooking, managing the house, taking care of the children, etc. According to Sentumbwe (as cited Ingstad & Whyte, 1995:171) visually impaired women can successfully fulfill the domestic roles expected of housewives.

2.3. The Legal and Policy Environment

2.3.1. International

The issue of persons with disabilities, which encompasses the visually impaired, has drawn global attention, as a result of which various activities were carried out towards ensuring their rights. Several resolutions, conventions and regulations have been issued by the United Nations starting from the early 70s and through out the 80s. These measures were aimed at improving the living situation of persons with disabilities. As indicated in the National Program of Action for Persons with Disabilities (1999) the following were the major ones:

- In July 1980 the Women's Decade Conference of the United Nations was held in Copenhagen and adopted a resolution, which enables to improve conditions of women with disabilities in all age groups.
- On December 3, 1982 the World programme of Action, concerning persons with disabilities was adopted by the United Nations and the period from 1983 – 1992 was decided to be United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.
- In June 1983 the International Labour Organization adopted convention No. 159 and recommendation No. 168 regarding vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

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- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly held on 20 December 1993 at its 48th session adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalizations of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

2.3.2. National Level

The government of Ethiopia has been taking various measures to implement the resolutions adopted by the United Nations regarding persons with disabilities. For instance Article 340 of the Civil Code of 1953 E.C. provides legal protection to persons with visually impaired/ disabilities. Then after ten years another proclamation was issued on order 70/63, No.16 on Miazia 5, 1963 E.C. that gave rise for the establishment of the then Rehabilitation Agency for the Disabled, which was the first government organization catering services for persons with disabilities.

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The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has special provisions for people with disabilities. The provisions are not given on specific type of disability but it includes all types of disability.

The following are provisions cited in the Constitution.

- Article 41 Sub Article 3 and 5 ascertain provision of necessary education, rehabilitation and support services for persons with disabilities.
- Article 34 provides that men and women, who have attained marriageable age as defined by law, have the right to marry and establish a family.

- Article 41 sub article 7 states that the government shall exert every effort to increase the opportunities for gainful employment of its citizens.

Other proclamations and policy statements have also special provisions for people with disabilities.

- Proclamation No. 101 of 1994 aims at ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to be engaged in job as per their capacity and competence.
- The government also developed the Social Welfare Policy in 1996 to address the basic needs of persons with disabilities by empowering families through communities and local institutions. Efforts are planned to be made to build self –confidence and feelings of independent living through education, skill training, gainful employment opportunities and other services to ensure the welfare of persons with disabilities.
- The Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) has developed a National Programme of Action for Rehabilitation of persons with Disabilities in 1999.
- The new education policy has provisions stating that education shall be provided to children with disability as the resources of the country permits. However, the policy still lacks concrete plan of action. The involvement of the various government institutions in Ethiopia has been very limited in the field of disability prevention and rehabilitation.

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Overall there are no problems of legal provisions concerning persons with vision impairment in the country. However, the implementation of these policies into practice has remained to be a major concern for many years. What is needed is the allocation of resources and implementation of what is stipulated in the policies including the change of social environment that hinders the integration of those with vision impairment.

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CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. AREA SAMPLING

Woreda 11 is one of the urban areas in Addis Ababa where high number visually impaired of persons live (CSA, 1994). Like wise the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind (ENAB) is a place where a large number of visually impaired persons within and from outside Addis Ababa often visit for meetings and other services. It is also a centre where different trainings and seminars are being provided for visually impaired individuals coming from various corners of the city. Therefore, this research was conducted in Worked 11, Kebele 23 of Addis Ababa.

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3.1.1. Physical features of Kebele 23

Kebele 23 is located in Woreda 11 at the extreme northeast outskirt of the city. The Kebele shares boundaries with Woreda 10 Kebele 22, 17 and 01 on the west, Woreda 11 Kebele 01 and 02 on the east, Woreda 11 Kebele 19 on the south and with Peasant Association on the north. In terms of area coverage it is one of the largest kebeles comprising four zones with rough topography.

Until the recent past, the Kebele was scarcely populated and partially covered with jungle. People who are economically poor to establish their residence in other parts of the city came to the area and settled in mass. Persons with disabilities who make their living through begging in different parts of the city are among those settlers.

3.1.2. Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

Demography: -According to the 1994 population and housing census, the total population of the Kebele is estimated to be 41,000. In the discussion made with the Kebele officials it was found that the population has now increased to 47,000. The sex distribution of the population is predominantly female. It is estimated that 60 per cent of the residents are female.

The age distribution of the population indicate that 30 per cent are children under the age of 18 years and 70 per cent youths and adults above the age of 18. The number of visually impaired people residing in the Kebele is estimated to be around 500 out of which half of them are assumed to be female.

Socio-Economic Features: - The great majority of the population in the Kebele is engaged in petty business. Around 75 per cent of the residents earn their living from weaving and firewood selling. Almost all fire wood sellers are women and the weavers are predominantly men. The rest 20 per cent are petty traders, daily labourers and beggars. Government employees represent 5 per cent of the population.

Most of the residents' income earning capacity is very low which is below poverty line. Hence, the great majority of the people in the locality lead lives characterized by appalling misery and abject poverty. They live in severe slum condition. Lack of adequate habitable house, provision of potable water, sanitation (private and communal latrine), etc. are common problems.

CCRDA

Generally, the overall socio-economic map of the Kebele shows that basic social service providing institutions and infrastructures like school, health centres, clinics, and other employment creating institutions are not available. The limited infrastructures that exist in the adjacent kebeles are scantly shared to the extent of adding more pressure to the services already existing in poor condition.

The continuous lack of these services significantly resulted in declining economic opportunities, high unemployment and other urban squalor all of which have a maximum negative effect on women and children residing within the locality.

CCRDA

3.2. POPULATION SAMPLING

The subjects of the study and main source of data for this study were sighted community members of Woreda 11, Kebele 23 that were above the age of 18 years. Visually impaired community members of the Kebele and the visually impaired persons from ENAB above the age of 18 have also been participants of the study. Moreover, key informants are also contacted to further enrich the collected data through other instruments.

3.3. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

With regard to the selection of the Woreda and the Keble purposeful sampling technique was used because of the high concentration of persons with visual impairment (CSA, 1994). Prior to this the researcher need to have the data at Woreda level. The available CSA, 1994 report does not show data of the visually impaired at Woreda level. However, the researcher

officially requested the Central Statistics Authority to get the 1994 statistical data of persons with visual impairment report of Addis Ababa at Woreda level, which was secured. Here the CSA, 1994 study include disability at Woreda level, only the report of the office is not made to include the data, which the researcher asked for it. This helped the researcher to identify the target Woreda, and then Woreda 11 was selected for the study.

After identifying the Woreda with the highest number of the target subjects then the researcher approached the Woreda Administration where the researcher was advised that Kebele 23, was one of the Kebeles of the Woreda 11 with the highest number of visually impaired persons. With this indication Kebele 23 was purposely selected for the study.

In the selection of the household, random-sampling technique was employed, thus 400 households were randomly selected from the total of 3170 households in Woreda 11,Keble 23. To do this a complete list of the households in the Kebele was obtained. The Kebele Administration very much cooperated with the researcher in this regard by giving the registered households. Then the researcher prepared sample frame. From the sample frame the 400 households were selected using gender strata to have equal number of sexes represented in the study. So, 200 sighted household female and 200 sighted household male are used for the structured interview to assess the attitude of the sighted toward the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired.

CCRDA

From the National Association of the Blind 17 (9 male and 8 female) subjects with vision impairment living in Addis Ababa who are above the age of 18 and above 12th grade educational background were purposefully selected for two focus group discussions. Another four focus group discussions were conducted with 44 individual (24 female and 20 male) residents of Kebele 23, who are above the age of 18. Among this, the two gender specific focus group discussions at the community level were conducted with the sighted community members and the other two gender specific focus group discussions were conducted with the visually impaired persons of the community. For the purpose of validating the data that was collected, purposefully selected 8 key informants were interviewed.

CCRDA

3.4. TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were employed. Both methods were employed in order to help generate facts about attitude of the sighted community on education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired persons. The data collecting instruments were structured questionnaires with both open and close-ended items, in-depth interview, and focus group discussion.

In addition, a three-point attitude scale with responses of "agree", "uncertain" and "disagree" was constructed in Amharic to investigate the attitude of the sighted toward the education, employment and marriage of persons with vision impairment. The attitude scale consisted of 20 items under each of the components (i.e. education, employment and marriage) and the

study subjects were requested to identify the items indicating their degree or level of agreement about the statements.

Focus group discussion guidelines and key informant guidelines were prepared and administered for collecting qualitative information from the sighted and visually impaired target community members of Kebele 23 and visually impaired persons from ENAB.

All the instruments were checked and feedback was received from four individuals with extensive experience in undertaking research, two of which were from the Department of Educational Psychology of the Addis Ababa University in addition to the comments made by the advisor of the researcher. The other two are individuals whom the researcher knows. A pre-test on 80 subjects in a different locality was conducted.

CCRDA

3.5. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND TECHNIQUE

After finalising the preparation of the necessary tools of data collection, the researcher selected seven data collectors. Their educational background and previous experience on such kind of activity was given due attention. Training and orientation was given to them on the subject matter by the researcher. Training of the data collectors and the pilot testing of the instruments took place to check the validity and reliability of the instrument on the subjects similar to that of the research subjects. Once minor adjustments were made following the pilot testing the tool was finalized. Prior to this, the researcher had to familiarize herself with

the study area i.e. Woreda 11 and ENAB. The various informal discussions and contacts made helped the researcher to facilitate the data collections process.

Then the information was collected from the respondents through questionnaires and guidelines under the direct involvement and close supervision of the researcher.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES

The data collected by questionnaires, through interview and focus group discussions were compiled and tabulated indicating the results in percentage terms.

The quantitative data analysis was made by using a computer software (SPSS). On the other hand, the qualitative data collected (in-depth interview, focus group discussion,) were reported directly by quoting the respondents so as to understand them speaking their minds. In addition to the primary data results, relative literature was consulted to further strengthen the findings. The information obtained from key informants was included to further enrich the information on the attitude of the public toward the education, employment and marriage of persons with vision impairment.

CCRDA

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1. Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics of the Sighted Respondents

The sighted respondents who have given their attitudes towards the education, employment and marriage of people with visual impairment were purposefully selected to reflect equal gender mix. The subjects were 400 i.e. 50 percent male and 50 percent female.

Table 4.1

Respondents by age and sex

Age	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female			
	N	%	N	%	N	%
20-30	84	21.0	86	21.5	170	42.5
31-40	40	10.0	45	11.3	85	21.3
41-50	30	7.5	38	9.5	68	17 .0
51 +	46	11.5	31	7.7	77	19.2
Total	**200**	**50.0**	**200**	**50.0**	**400**	**100**

CCRDA

As indicated above in table 4.1 many of the respondents (42.5 %) are young adults between the ages of 20 and 30. The profile of the respondents also indicate that nearly 89 per cent are Orthodox Christians, 61.5 per cent are married and over 60 per cent have gone through formal education of grades 1-12(refer table 4.4). However, the majority or (63.8%) are not employed as indicated in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Respondents' by Religion, Marital status and Employment Status

Religion	Total		Marital Status	Total		Employment Status	Total	
	N	%		N	%		No.	%
Orthodox	355	88.7	Married	246	61.5	Employed	145	36.2
Muslim	12	3.0	Single	120	30.0	Not Employed	255	63.8
Protestant	27	6.7	Divorced	8	2.0	**Total**	**400**	**100**
Catholic	1	0.3	Widowed	26	6.5			
Others	5	1.3	**Total**	**400**	**100**			
Total	**400**	**100**						

4.2. Attitude of the sighted Respondents

4.2.1. Knowledge and Perception of Visual Impairment

There are many people with visual impairment who are permanent residents of Kebele 23. However, most of the sample respondents (57.8%) did not have people with visual impairment whom they know closely. This could be the result of the segregation practiced by both parties. Sometimes the sighted do not want to talk about people with visual impairment and the people with visual impairment feel they are inferior and isolated as indicated in the focus group discussion.

However, despite the lack of close knowledge of people with visual impairment many of the sighted respondents perceive people with visual impairment as useful and productive. It was 52.7 per cent of the sighted people who have this positive opinion as cited in the table 4.3.

CCRDA

The differences in the observed responses were found significant. This indicates that more than half of the respondents believe that visually impaired persons are useful and productive.

Table 4.3

Respondents' Knowledge and Perception of a person with Visual Impairment

Sex		Closely know a person with VI			Perceive a VI Person as	Total	
		Yes	No	Total		N	%
Male	N	80	120	200	Useless	25	6.3
	%	20.0	30.0	50.0	Dependent	147	36.7
Female	N	89	111	200	Unproductive	17	4.3
	%	22.2	27.8	50.0	Useful and Productive	211	52.7
Total	**N**	**169**	**231**	**400**	**Total**	**400**	**100.0**
	%	**42.2**	**57.8**	**100.0**			

As table 4.4 shows among those responded visually impaired persons as useful and productive, more than 40 per cent of them are those who have formal education (1-12). This means that educated sighted respondents have positive attitude towards the visually impaired.

CCRDA

Table 4.4

Respondents' Educational Status and Perception of a Visually Impaired Person

Perceive a Visually Impaired Person as		Educational level					Total
		Illiterate	Read and write	Grades 1-8	Grades 9-12	Others	
Useless	N	10	5	8	2	0	25
	%	2.5	1.3	2	0.5		6.3
Dependent	N	42	24	49	30	2	147
	%	10.5	6	12.3	7.5		36.7
Unproductive	N	5	5	5	2	0	17
	%	1.3	1.2	1.3	0.5		4.2
Useful and Productive	N	37	21	65	81	7	211
	%	9.3	5.3	16. 2	20.2	1.75	52.7
Total	N	**94**	**55**	**127**	**115**	**9**	**400**
	%	**23.5**	**13.8**	**31.8**	**28. 7**	**2.2**	**100.0**

4.2.2. Beliefs About visual Impairment

Many people assume that individuals who are 'blind' have no vision and thus live in a world of total darkness (Schulz, 1980). Their experiences in the dark with groping for articles or grappling over furniture lead them to assume that visually impaired persons live in a similar world.

There are numerous beliefs about persons with visual impairment. Some of the beliefs originate from the cultural heritage of people. The causes of visual impairment have also been attributed to diseases. As indicated on table below 49.3 per cent of the respondents hold this opinion (98 F & 99 M). The result shows that the frequency of male and female respondents on the causes of visual impairment was not statistically significant. This means that there were no differences between the opinion of male and female respondents

CCRDA

regarding the causes of visual impairment. A large majority (97 %) also believes that visual impairment is not communicable. The opinion of the respondents on causes of vision impairment and the gender impact could be observed from the following table 4.5.

Table 4. 5

Respondents' on the causes and communicability of visual impairment

Causes of Visual Impairment	Total		
	F	M	%
When Parents do something bad to others	5	3	2.0
Inherited from Parents	3	-	0.8
Evil Eye/Possessed by Demons	7	13	5.0
Accident	57	59	29.0
Disease	98	99	49.2
Others	22	18	10.0
Not Sure	8	8	4.0
Total	**200**	**200**	**100**

Visual Impairment is	Total	
	N	%
Communicable	12	3.0
Not Communicable	388	97.0
Total	**400**	**100**

The positive attitude of the sample respondents towards people with visual impairment has been further explained by their willingness to assist them in time of need. As indicated in table 4.6 below more than 96 per cent are willing to provide assistance. For most of the respondents (more than 84 %), this willingness emanated out of humanity (see Annex A.). The educational level of the respondents have no significant difference in their attitude of willingness to support the visually impaired as shown in table 4.6.

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Table 4. 6

Respondents' by willingness to assist people with Visual Impairment and Educational Status

Willingness to help		Educational level					Total
		Illiterate	Read and write	Grades 1-8	Grades 9-12	Others	
Willing	Nr	92	52	122	111	8	385
	%	23.0	13.0	30.5	27.8	2.0	96.2
Not Willing	N	2	3	5	4	1	15
	%	0.5	0.8	1.3	1.0	0.3	3.8
Total	**N**	**94**	**55**	**127**	**115**	**9**	**400**
	%	**23.5**	**13.8**	**31.8**	**28.7**	**2.2**	**100.0**

Many of the respondents do not relate visual impairment to poverty. The attitude of more than 266 (66 %) of the respondents is that visual impairment does not happen to poor people only. The following table 4.7 shows significant frequency difference between the respondents on the opinion that visual impairment happens only to poor people. Thus, over (66%) respondents believe that visual impairment is not the problem of only poor people or caused only by poverty. The table below indicates the attitude of the sighted on the relationship of poverty and visual impairment.

CCRDA

Table 4.7

***Respondent's by Opinion on whether Visual Impairment Happens to poor people* only**

VI Happens to poor people only		Total
Yes	N	134
	%	33.5
No	N	266
	%	66.5
Total	**Nr**	**400**
	%	**100.0**

Even though most of the respondents feel that the effect of visual impairment is similar to both sexes (table4.9), slightly more than 53 per cent believe that it is more difficult for a visually impaired woman/girl to participate in social/community activities than a visually impaired man/boy. This is shown in table 4.8.

Table 4. 8

***Respondents' pinion on the social /community participation of the visual impaired and preference to have a visual Impaired* girls/boys.**

Social/community participation is difficult for the VI woman/girl than VI Man/boy	**Number**		**Total**	**Preferable to have a visually impaired boy than a girl**	**Total**	
	M	F				
Yes	108	105	213	Yes	N	211
	27	26.3	53.3%		%	52.8
No	92	95	187	No	N	189
	23	23.7	46.7%		%	47.2
Total	**200**	**200**	**400**	**Total**	N	**400**
	50	**50**	**100.0**		%	**100**

The attitude of the respondents over the preference of having a boy to a girl with visual impairment is shown in table 4.8. More than 52 per cent respondents think that for parents, it is preferable to have a boy child with visual impairment than a girl child with similar problems, the major reasons being fear of facing various problems. This indicates that a boy child with visual impairment faces less problems compared to a girl child. In other wards this shows that there is a better social environment for a boy child with vision impairment compared to a girl child with the same problem.

CCRDA

The effect of visual impairment by gender has not been so significant. Most of the respondents believe that visual impairment is the same for both women/girls and men/boys. This has been expressed by 71 per cent of the sample interviewees as indicated in table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Respondents' by opinion on Visual Impairment on Women/Girls

Visual Impairment on Women/Girls is	Total	
	N	%
Worse than Boys/Men	101	25.2
Better than Boys/Men	15	3.8
The same for both	284	71.0
Total	**400**	**100**

CCRDA

For most of the respondents, having a child with visual impairment is not a burden to the family. More than 67 per cent have this attitude. The reason cited by those who believe otherwise is the additional effort and additional time required to raise a child with visual impairment. This has been the opinion of 77.9 per cent of those who feel it as a burden as indicated in table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Respondent's opinion on having a child with visual impairment

Having a child with VI is a burden to parents		Total	Having a child with VI is a burden, because		Total
Yes	N	131	Requires special effort and additional time	N	102
				%	77.9
	%	32.8	Does not support or contribute to the family	N	22
				%	16.8
No	N	269	Makes parents feel sad and sorry	N	7
				%	5.3
	%	67.3	**Total**	N	131
Total	N	**400**		%	100
	%	**100.0**			

4.2.3. Education of the Persons with Visual Impairment

Most of the respondents think that men/boys with visual impairment have better opportunity for education. It was more than 93 per cent, who have expressed this opinion. The gender composition of the respondents who share this opinion was almost equal as indicated in table 4.11.

CCRDA

Table 4.11

Respondent's opinion on opportunity for Education among the Visually Impaired s

There is better opportunity for education of VI		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Men/boys	N	183	190	373
	%	45.8	47.6	93.2
Women/girls	N	17	10	27
	%	4.3	2.5	6.8
Total	**N**	**200**	**200**	**400**
	%	**50.0**	**50.0**	**100.0**

As indicated in table 4.12 the major reasons cited for this better opportunity has been

- Priority given to men/boys by the community, and
- the preoccupation of girls/women with home management and marriage.

The majorities of the proponents of this view are those with better educational background. Out of the total respondents who hold this opinion 6o percent are those who have attained an educational level of between grades 1-12(see table 4.36). The attitude of the sighted towards the education of people with visual impairment is summarized in the following table 4.12.

CCRDA

Table4.12

Respondents' by opinion on better education opportunity among the visually impaired

There is better opportunity for education of VI		**Total**
Men/boys	N	373
	%	93.2
Women/girls	N	27
	%	6.8
Total	N	**400**
	%	**100.0**

Reason men/boys with VI have better opportunity for education		**Total**
The community gives them the opportunity and priority	N	190
	%	50.9
Have better interest and capacity	N	104
	%	27.9
They are useful	N	2
	%	0.5
Less opportunity of girls/women for education	N	14
	%	3.8
Low attitude of the family and the society on girls/women	N	27
	%	7.2
Girls/women are afraid to go out due to their disability	N	5
	%	1.3
Girl/women are preoccupied with marriage and home management	N	31
	%	8.3
Total	N	**373**
	%	**100.0**

CCRDA

The opinion of the respondents on why women/girls are not sent to school is related to their belief that females' education is useless. More than 91per cent of the respondents have expressed this opinion out of this 45 per cent are female respondents. The male respondents who share this attitude is slightly high as shown in table 4.13

Table 4.13.

Respondents' reasons for not sending women/girls with Visual Impairment to school

Reasons for not sending Women/girls with VI to school		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
They have low capacity to learn	N	14	20	34
	%	3.5	5.0	8.5
Female's education is useless	N	186	180	366
	%	46.5	45.0	91.5
Total	N	**200**	**200**	**400**
	%	**50.0**	**50.0**	**100.0**

Many of the respondents are not certain as to whether there are policies that support the education of people with visual impairment. Slightly more than 45 per cent are uncertain of the existence of such policies while nearly 42 per cent think that such a policy exists. This shows that the respondents are not aware of the availability of the already existing policies. This is indicated in table 4.14.

Table4. 14

Respondents' by opinion on the existence of favorable educational policies

There are favorable policies that support the education of persons with VI		Total
Yes	N	167
	%	41.8
No	N	52
	%	13.0
Uncertain	N	181
	%	45.2
Total	N	**400**
	%	**100.0**

CCRDA

4.2.4. Employment of Persons with Vision Impairment

The attitude of the respondents on the availability of better opportunities for employment is in favor of men/boys. Slightly more than 95 per cent of the respondents feel that men/boys have better opportunity for employment. The proportion of female respondents who share this opinion is slightly higher than the males (see Annex B).

Many of the respondents relate the opportunity for employment to having access to education. More than 42 per cent of the respondents believe that men/boys with visual impairment have better opportunity for employment because they have better opportunity for education. The second most important reason is acceptability. The respondents believe that employers better accept men/boys with visual impairment than their female counterparts as indicated in the focus group discussion. Respondents' opinion in this regard is shown in table 4.15.

CCRDA

Table 4.15

Respondents by opinion on better employment opportunity

There is better opportunity for employment of VI		Total
Men/boys	N	381
	%	95.2
Women/girls	N	19
	%	4.8
Total	N	**400**
	%	**100.0**

Reasons why men/boys with VI have better opportunity for employment		Total
Have better opportunity for education	N	162
	%	42.5
Have the capacity to look for jobs	N	48
	%	12.6
Have better social contact	N	32
	%	8.3
Have better acceptance in employment	N	85
	%	22.3
Take responsibility better than girls/women	N	13
	N	3.4
Pursue their education and complete without losing hope	N	34
	%	8.9
Women/girls are preoccupied with pregnancy and marriage	N	7
	%	2
Total	N	**381**
	%	**100.0**

CCRDA

The attitude of the respondents on the basis of their employment status reflect that more of the unemployed respondents believe that men/boys with visual impairment have better opportunity than women/girls in employment. It was over 60 per cent of the employed and 32.5 per cent of the unemployed who have expressed this view (see Annex C).

The vast majority of the respondents are not also uncertain on whether there are favorable policies that support the employment of persons with visual impairment. More than 48 per cent have explained their uncertainty as indicated in table4.16.

Table 4.16

Respondents' by opinion on the existence of favorable Employment Policies

There are favorable policies that support the employment of people with VI		Total
Yes	N	147
	%	36.8
No	N	60
	%	15.0
Uncertain	N	193
	%	48.2
Total	N	**400**
	%	**100.0**

4.2.5. Marriage of Persons with Vision Impairment

When it comes to marriage not as many people are willing to get married to people with visual impairment. Over 54.3 per cent of the sighted interviewees are not willing to get married to people with visual impairment as indicated in table No.4.17. Concerning the willingness to marry looks contradictory with the positive attitude of perceiving people with visual impairment as useful and productive. One could really doubt the sincerity of the positive attitude of the respondents.

CCRDA

Table 4.17

Respondents 'opinion on willingness to get married to people with visual impairment

Willingness to marry people with Visual Impairment	Total	
	N	%
Willing	181	45.2
Not Willing	217	54.3
No Comment	2	0.5
Total	**400**	**100**

Most of those who said "they are unwilling to marry are the educated and the unemployed ones (table 4.18 & 4.19). Among those who are unwilling to get married to people with visual impairment 151 (37.8 %) are those who have attended formal schooling grades 1-12 as indicated in the table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18

Respondents' willingness to marry people with Visual Impairment by Educational Status

Willingness to get married		Educational level					Total
		Illiterate	Read and write	Grades 1-8	Grades 9-12	Others	
Willing	N	32	14	64	67	4	181
	%	8.0	3.5	16.0	16.8	1.0	45.2
Not Willing	N	61	40	63	48	5	217
	%	15.2	10.0	15.8	12.0	1.2	54.2
Not Stated	N	1	1	-	-	-	2
	%	0.3	0.3	-	-	-	0.5
Total	N	**94**	**55**	**127**	**115**	**9**	**400**
	%	**23.5**	**13.8**	**31.8**	**28.8**	**2.2**	**100.0**

CCRDA

On the other hand 134 respondents or 33.5 per cent are unemployed, which could mean they are much worried about economic than the social aspect and other factors for refusing to get married to people with visual impairment. This seems to coincide with the desire of many people who want partners to equally generate income to the household. This is shown in table 4.19 below.

Table 4.19

Respondents' Opinion by willingness to marry people with VI by Employment Status

Willingness to get married VI		Employment status		Total
		Employed	Not employed	
Willing	N	60	121	181
	%	15.0	30.2	45.2
Not Willing	N	83	134	217
	%	20.8	33.5	54.2
No Comment	N	2	-	2
	N	0.5	-	0.5
Total	%	**145**	**255**	**400**
		36.2	**63.8**	**100.0**

The attitude of the respondents regarding the opportunity for marriage of people with visual impairment is not much different from their attitude on education. Almost 92 per cent believe that men/boys with visual impairment have better opportunity for marriage than women/girls.

The major reasons attributed to this opinion emanated from the belief that men/boys have the capacity/courage to select and request for marriage. More than 42 per cent of the respondents have given this explanation. The other reasons include better opportunities of education and employment for men/boys as indicated in table 4. 20.

CCRDA

Table4.20

Respondents' opinion on Opportunities for marriage and the associated reasons

There is better opportunity for marriage of VI		**Total**
Men/boys	N	366
	%	91.5
Women/girls	N	36
	%	8.5
Total	N	**400**
	%	**100.0**

Reasons for having better opportunity for marriage by men/boys with VI		**Total**
Have better social contact/exposure and participation	N	11
	%	3.0
Have better opportunity for education & employment	N	58
	%	15.8
Have the capacity and courage to select and request for marriage	N	155
	%	42.3
Income source	N	79
	%	21.6
Better attitude	N	4
	%	1.0
The capacity to manage the family	N	14
	%	3.8
Women/girls do not ask by tradition	N	23
	%	6.3
Women/girls are willing	N	3
	%	0.8
Men/boys are superior	N	7
	%	1.9
It is an accepted norm	N	12
	%	3.3
Total	N	**366**
	%	**100.0**

CCRDA

Most of the respondents (more than 61%) who feel that there is better opportunity of marriage for men/boys with visual impairment than women/girls with visual impairment are married. Among this, about 56 per cent of them are male/boys respondents (refer Annex table D).

The respondents feel the major criterion that affects the concluding of marriage with people having visual impairment is the impairment itself, followed by economic status. . As indicated in table 4.21 about 78 per cent respondents put visual impairment as the prime criterion affecting the selection of marriage partner. There is no significant difference between the male and female respondents in this regard as could be observed in the following table 4.21.

Table 4.21

Respondents' by opinion on the selection criteria that most affect the marriage of people with Visual Impairment

Selection criteria that most affect the marriage of people with VI		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Economic Status	N	29	37	66
	%	7.3	9.2	16.5
Educational Status	N	3	4	7
	%	.8	1.0	1.8
Beauty	N	5	-	5
	%	1.3	-	1.3
Visual impairment	N	160	151	311
	%	40.0	37.8	77.8
Others	N	3	8	11
	%	.8	2.0	2.8
Total	N	**200**	**200**	**400**
	%	**50.0**	**50.0**	**100.0**

The development of the social welfare policy is not known by most of the respondents. The number of respondents who are not certain about the existence of any policy that would promote the family formation (marriage) of persons with visual impairment is significant. It was 59 per cent of the respondents who have spoken of their uncertainty.

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Only 10.2 per cent of the respondents are aware of the existence of a policy that could promote the family formation of persons with visual impairment as shown in table 4.22.

Table 4.22

Respondents' opinion on the existence of favorable marriage policies

There are favorable policies that support the family formation (marriage) of people with VI		**Total**
Yes	N	41
	%	10.2
No	N	123
	%	30.8
Uncertain	N	236
	%	59.0
Total	N	**400**
	%	**100.0**

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4.3. Attitude Scale Results of the Sample Sighted Population

4.3.1. Education of the Visually Impaired: Right *to Integration, Education, and Teachers' Role*

Concerning the attitude of the respondents toward the education of children with visual impairment 98.3 per cent indicated that they should get education. Both the illiterate and literate respondents expressed this attitude (table 4.23).

Table 4.23

Education should be the fundamental rights of children/ persons with Visual impairment

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	93		1	94
	%	23.3		0.3	23.5
Read & Write	N	55			55
	%	13.8			13.8
Grades 1-8	N	122	3	2	127
	%	30.5	0.8	0.5	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	114	1		115
	%	28.5	0.3		28.7
Others	N	9			9
	%	2.2			2.2
Total	N	**393**	**4**	**3**	**400**
	%	**98.3**	**1.0**	**0.8**	**100.0**

As to the integration of visually impaired students about 79 per cent supported for their enrollment with sighted students. Out of these 49 per cent of the respondents who share this attitude are those who have formal education (grade 1-12). This indicates that the majority of the respondents have positive attitude toward the integration of visually impaired children, the majority being the educated respondents. This is indicated in the following table 4.24.

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Table 4.24

Visually Impaired Children should be enrolled with sighted students

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	70	7	17	94
	%	17.5	1.8	4.3	23.5
Read & Write	N	43	8	4	55
	%	10.8	2.0	1.0	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	95	6	26	127
	%	23.8	1.5	6.5	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	101	2	12	115
	%	25.3	0.5	3.0	28.7
Others	N	6		3	9
	%	1.5		0.8	2.2
Total	N	**315**	**23**	**62**	**400**
	%	**78.8**	**5.8**	**15.5**	**100.0**

With regard to the value, society attaches to the education of visually impaired boys and girl's, 49 per cent of the respondents expressed that the education of girl children is less important. Twenty four per cent of them are female respondents who share this opinion. There is no significant difference on the frequency of the sexes on the given choices regarding the importance of girls' education. Almost equal numbers of male and female respondents share this opinion (24.5% male & 24% female). This is indicated in table.4.25.

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Table 4.25

Education of visually impaired girls/young women is less important compared to the education of visually impaired boys/young men

Sex		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Male	N	98	32	70	200
	%	24.5	8.0	17.5	50.0
Female	N	96	36	68	200
	%	24.0	9.0	17.0	50.0
Total	N	**194**	**68**	**138**	**400**
	%	**48.5**	**17.0**	**34.5**	**100.0**

Concerning the ability of the visually impaired students to learn with that of the sighted about 80 per cent of the respondents indicated that they are as intelligent as that of the sighted peers. However, in a response to a different attitudinal question where they have been asked to state their views regarding the intelligence of girls, about 30 per cent of them responded that they believe visually impaired girls/young women are less intelligent than visually impaired boys/men. More female than men shares this opinion. This is indicated in table 4.26.

Table 4.26

Vision impaired are intelligent as the sighted and vision impaired girls/women are less intelligent than visually impaired boys/men

VI girls/women are less intelligent					VI are as intelligent as the sighted ones				
Sex		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Sex		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Male	N	52	41	107	Male	N	165	17	18
	%	13.0	10.3	26.8		%	41.3	4.3	4.5
Female	N	66	39	95	Female	N	154	20	26
	%	16.5	9.8	23.8		%	38.5	5.0	6.5
Total	N	**118**	**80**	**202**	**Total**		**319**	**37**	**44**
	%	**29.5**	**20.0**	**50.5**			**79.8**	**9.3**	**11.0**

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Respondents stated their opinion as to whether schools do have an open door policy in accepting children with visual impairment or not, 22 per cent mentioned that schools are not willing, and nearly 34 per cent were uncertain, This indicates that these respondents have agreed that school access for visually impaired is limited. But more than 44 per cent of the respondents have disagreed on the opinion that schools are not willing to accept children with visual impairment in to their schools. This is to say that most schools do accept children with visual impairment; however, this does not reflect the objective reality as expressed by focus group participants (table 4.27).

Table 4.27

Regular schools are not willing to accept children with visual impairment

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	23	35	36	94
	%	5.8	8.8	9.0	23.5
Read & Write	N	13	22	20	55
	%	3.3	5.5	5.0	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	30	37	60	127
	%	7.5	9.3	15.0	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	17	39	59	115
	%	4.3	9.8	14.8	28.7
Others	N	4	2	3	9
	%	1.0	0.5	0.8	2.2
Total	N	**87**	**135**	**178**	**400**
	%	**21.8**	**33.8**	**44.5**	**100.0**

As indicated in table 4.28 over 46 per cent of all the respondents agreed those special class sessions negatively affect the psychosocial development of the visually impaired

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children. This indicates that most of the respondents believe visually impaired children have to be integrated into formal school system.

Table 4.28

Special class has a negative effect on the psychosocial development of the visually impaired

Respondent's educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	37	37	20	94
	%	9.3	9.3	5.0	23.5
Read & Write	N	26	19	10	55
	%	6.5	4.8	2.5	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	50	40	37	127
	%	12.5	10.0	9.3	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	69	14	32	115
	%	17.3	3.5	8.0	28.7
Others	N	3	3	3	9
	%	0.8	0.8	0.8	2.2
Total	N	**185**	**113**	**102**	**400**
	%	**46.3**	**28.3**	**25.5**	**100.0**

4.3.2. Attitude of the respondents on Employment of Persons with Vision Impairment: *Life Goals, Attitudes Towards Competence, Work and Employment Opportunities*

As indicated in table below results shown that nearly 90 percent of the respondents acknowledge (20 per cent of the illiterate and 70 per cent of the "read and write and above educational background category) that persons with visual impairment have career development goals in life just like other members of the society.

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Table 4.29

Persons with Visual Impairment have career development goals in life

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	80	10	4	94
	%	20.0	2.5	1.0	23.5
Read & Write	N	47	5	3	55
	%	11.8	1.3	0.8	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	114	8	5	127
	%	28.5	2.0	1.3	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	109	4	2	115
	%	27.3	1.0	0.5	28.7
Others	N	8	1		9
	%	2.0	0.3		2.2
Total	N	**358**	**28**	**14**	**400**
	%	**89.5**	**7.0**	**3.5**	**100.0**

On the other hand as shown in the following table 4.30 over 23 per cent of the respondents indicated on the attitude scale that those persons with visual impairment should not bear higher-level positions in public offices even if they have the required qualification. But more than 66 per cent of the respondents disagree on the opinion that visually impaired persons should not bear higher level of position. This indicates that the majority of the respondents have positive attitude toward the visually impaired acquiring higher position. Among this more than 22 per cent are with in the education level of grades 9-12.

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Table 4.30

Persons with Vision Impairment should not bear higher-level positions in public offices

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	23	17	54	94
	%	5.8	4.3	13.5	23.5
Read & Write	N	16	4	35	55
	%	4.0	1.0	8.8	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	36	8	83	127
	%	9.0	2.0	20.8	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	18	11	86	115
	%	4.5	2.8	21.5	28.7
Others	N		2	7	9
	%		0.5	1.8	2.2
Total	N	**93**	**42**	**265**	**400**
	%	**23.2**	**10.5**	**66.2**	**100.0**

Regarding the ability of the visually impaired young girls/women in adequately performing tasks assigned to them, more than 35 per cent of the respondents indicated that they are useless and unproductive compared to young boys/men having visual impairment. On the other hand over 47 per cent of the respondents believe that women/girls with visual impairment are useful and productive as shown on table 4.31.

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Table 4.31

Women/girls with visual impairment are useless and unproductive, compared to men/boys with Visual Impairment

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	44	23	27	94
	%	11.0	5.8	6.8	23.5
Read & Write	N	27	10	18	55
	%	6.8	2.5	4.5	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	47	18	62	127
	%	11.8	4.5	15.5	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	25	17	73	115
	%	6.3	4.3	18.3	28.7
Others	N		1	8	9
	%		0.3	2.0	2.2
Total	N	**143**	**69**	**188**	**400**
	%	**35.8**	**17.3**	**47.0**	**100.0**

The sighted respondents who are employed have positive attitude towards working for/with a person having vision impairment. As indicated in the following table 4.32, nearly 76 per cent of the respondents agreed or want to work with/for a person with vision impairment. Among this 28 per cent of the respondent are employed. In general, it was only 20.5 per cent who are not willing to work with/for a person with visual impairment.

Table 4.32

I don't want to work with or for a person with Visual Impairment

Employment status		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Employed	N	35		110	145
	%	8.8		27.5	36.3
Not employed	N	47	16	192	255
	%	11.8	4.0	48.0	63.8
Total	N	82	16	302	400
	%	20.5	4.0	75.5	100.0

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As shown in the following table 4.33 the attitude of sighted respondents regarding employment opportunities indicated that comparatively a high proportion (33.8 percent) are not certain about the discrimination of the visually impaired in employment. A similar population (32.5 per cent) believes that people with vision impairment are not discriminated in employment However 29 percent believe that they are discriminate as indicated in table 4.33.

Table 4.33

People with Visual Impairment are not discriminated in employment

Employment status		**Agree**	**Uncertain**	**Disagree**	**Total**
Employed	N	72	38	35	145
	%	18.0	9.5	8.8	36.3
Not employed	N	58	97	80	255
	%	14.5	24.3	20.0	63.8
Total		**130**	**135**	**115**	**400**
	%	**32.5**	**33.8**	**28.8**	**100.0**

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Concerning the extent of discrimination for job opportunities between both sexes, 55 per cent indicated that women having visual impairment are more discriminated than men in employment, as shown in the table 4.34 below.

Table 4.34

Women with Visual Impairment are more discriminated than men with visual impairment in employment

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	43	40	11	94
	%	10.8	10.0	2.8	23.5
Read & Write	N	26	22	7	55
	%	6.5	5.5	1.8	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	65	47	15	127
	%	16.5	11.73	3.8	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	81	18	16	115
	%	20.3	4.5	4.0	28.7
Others	N	5	3	1	9
	%	1.3	0.8	0.3	2.2
Total	**N**	**220**	**130**	**45**	**400**
	%	**55.0**	**32.5**	**12.5**	**100.0**

Respondents were asked to give their opinion on the chances of employment for persons with vision impairment. As indicated in the following table it was 57 per cent of the respondents (both employed and not employed) who have explained that the chances of employment for persons with vision impairment is low in the labour market. Among this 37 per cent who shares this opinion are those who have formal education level (grade 1-12) as indicated in table 4.35.

Table 4.35

The chances of employment for persons with Visual Impairment are very low in the labor market

Employment status		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Employed	N	85	30	30	145
	%	21.3	7.5	7.5	36.3
Not employed	N	143	52	60	255
	%	35.8	13.0	15.0	63.8
Total	**N**	**228**	**82**	**90**	**400**
	%	**57.0**	**20.5**	**22.5**	**100.0**

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The attitude of the respondents on the basis of their educational level indicated that over 69 per cent of the respondents of both the "illiterate" and "Read and Write" and above category expressed that persons with visual impairment have very low demand in the labour market. As shown in the following table 4.36 over 69 per cent of the respondents has indicated that employment opportunity for men with vision impairment is higher than women with similar problem. Here 45 per cent who share this opinion are among those who have educational level of grade 1-12.

Table 4. 36

Employment opportunity is higher for men with Visual Impairment compared to women with visual impairment

Educational Level		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Illiterate	N	61	21	12	94
	%	15.3	5.3	3.0	23.5
Read & Write	N	31	16	8	55
	%	7.8	4.0	2.0	13.8
Grades 1-8	N	98	18	11	127
	%	24.5	4.5	2.8	31.8
Grades 9-12	N	81	18	16	115
	%	20.3	4.5	4.0	28.8
Others	N	6	2	1	9
	%	1.5	0.5	0.3	2.3
Total	N	**277**	**75**	**48**	**400**
	%	**69.3**	**18.8**	**12.0**	**100.0**

4.3.3. Marriage Life of the Visually Impaired: *Selection of Marriage Partner, Discharging Home Management and Motherhood Responsibilities, and Influence of Income on Family Formation*

As shown in table 4.37 below the respondents have given their attitudes on the opportunities for marriage of the visually impaired. For nearly 73 per cent of the

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respondents (employed and unemployed) believe the visually impaired men have more opportunities to be selected for marriage than women with similar problems. Among this 46 per cent are unemployed sharing this opinion as indicated below table 4.37.

Table 4.37

Visually Impaired men have better opportunities to be selected for marriage

Employment Status		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Employed	N	107	23	15	145
	%	26.8	5.8	3.8	36.3
Not Employed	N	184	48	23	255
	%	46.0	12.0	5.8	63.8
Total	N	291	71	38	400
	%	72.8	17.8	9.5	100.0

As shown in the following table nearly half of the respondents (49.3 per cent) do not want to get married to people with visual impairment even if they have regular income, among this 29 per cent of them are unemployed. This indicates the negative attitude the respondents have towards the marriage relation ship with visually impaired persons.

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Table. 4.38

I am (was) not ready to marry a person with visual impairment even if he/she has regular income

Employment Status		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Employed	N	80	12	53	145
	%	20.0	3.0	13.3	36.3
Not Employed	N	117	35	103	255
	%	29.3	8.8	25.8	63.8
Total	**N**	**197**	**47**	**156**	**400**
	%	**49.3**	**11.8**	**39.0**	**100.0**

As indicated in the following table 4.39 the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the marriage preference of the visually impaired men. Slightly more than 58 per cent of the respondents believe that most visually impaired men select /prefer sighted women for marriage than visually impaired women.

Table 4.39

Most visually impaired men select/prefer sighted women for marriage

Employment Status		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Employed	N	95	37	13	145
	%	23.8	9.3	3.3	36.3
Not Employed	N	138	74	43	255
	%	34.5	18.5	10.8	63.8
Total	N	233	111	56	400
	%	58.3	27.8	14.0	100.0

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As shown in the table 4.40 below over 62 per cent or 249 of the respondents confirmed that men /boys with visual impairment who are economically well off do not have difficulty in the selection of marriage partner compared to female/girls. This indicates that there is positive attitude of the respondents towards the visually impaired men/boys with better economic situation regarding the selection of marriage partners.

Table 4.40

Economically well off men/young boys with visual Impairment do not have difficulty to select their partners

Sex		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Male	N	131	27	42	200
	%	32.8	6.8	10.5	50.0
Female	N	118	30	52	200
	%	29.5	7.5	13.0	50.0
Total	N	**249**	**57**	**94**	**400**
	%	**62.3**	**14.3**	**23.5**	**100.0**

As table 4.41 indicates that over 49 per cent (24.8 per cent males and 24.5 per cent females) of the respondents expressed their opinion that "women with visual impairment are unable to carry out home management activities". Here the sex difference has no significance in the opinion, almost equal number of female respondents share this opinion.

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Table 4. 41

Women with visual impairment are not able to carry out home management activities

Sex		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Total
Male	N	99	46	55	200
	%	24.8	11.5	13.8	50.0
Female	N	98	38	64	200
	%	24.5	9.5	16.0	50.0
Total	N	**197**	**84**	**119**	**400**
	%	**49.3**	**21.0**	**29.8**	**100.0**

4.4. Focus Group Discussion Results

4.4.1. Background

The focus group discussions were held with different sectors of the society drawn from different walks of life. The focus group discussion held with the sighted were held for the purpose of knowing the attitude of the sighted community toward the education, employment and marriage of persons with vision impairment.

Other focus group discussions were also held with the vision impaired to understand how the attitude of the sighted is perceived by the persons with vision impairment, to solicit the participants' support in understanding the social environment and to receive their candid views in improving the life situation of urban persons with vision impairment.

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4.4.2. Profile of the Focus Group Discussion Participants

A total of 61 (32 female and 29 male) participants were organized in six gender specific focus groups. The four focus group participants are all residents of Kebele 23. Two other focus group discussions (one female group and one male group all with vision impairment) were held with participants drawn from various corners of the city but in one way or another have relations with the National Association of the Blind. Table 4.42 below indicates the sight status by location, gender and number of participants in each FGD.

Table 4.42

Characteristics of the six *Focus Group Discussions participants*

Location where FGDs were conducted	# of FGD	# of male FGD participants with vision impairment	# of Female FGD participants with vision impairment	Sighted male FGD participants	Sighted Females FGD participants	Total FGD participants	Percent
Kebele23	4	12	12	8	12	44	72
Blind Association	2	9	8	-	-	17	28
Total	**6**	**21**	**20**	**8**	**12**	**61**	**100**
Percent		**34**	**33**	**13**	**20**	**100**	

According to the table shown above, 44 or seventy two per cent of the focus group discussion participants are residents of the kebele where the study is conducted while twenty-eight percent of the participants were from ENAB. Sixty seven per cent or 17 of the participants are persons with vision Impairment from both sexes while thirty three per cent are sighted people of both sexes.

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Table 4.43.

FGD Participants by Age and Marital Status

Age Range	Sex		Number	percent
	Male	Female		
20-30	12	21	33	54.1
31-40	15	6	21	34.4
41-50	-	4	4	6.6
51-60	1	-	1	1.6
61+	1	1	2	3.3
Total	**29**	**32**	**61**	**100**
Percent	**48**	**53**	**100**	

Marital Status	Sex		No	Percent
	Male	Female		
Single	10	7	17	27.9
Married	19	25	44	72.1
Total	**29**	**32**	**61**	**100**

Over fifty four per cent of the six focus groups discussion participants fall within the age category of 20-30. Over thirty four percent are between the ages of 31-40. Those who are over sixty years of age constitute 3.3 per cent. Regarding the marital status of participants, over seventy two per cent are married while close to twenty eight per cent are single.

Table 4.44.

FGD Participants by Educational Background and Sex

Education Background	**Sex**		**Number**	**percent**
	Male	**Female**		
Illiterate	1	11	12	19.7
Read & write	3	-	3	4.9
Grades 1-8	7	5	12	19.7
9-12	8	10	18	29.5
12+	8	5	13	21.3
Degree	2	1	3	4.9
Total	**29**	**32**	**61**	**100**
Percent.	**47.5**	**42.6**	**100**	

Almost thirty percent of all the focus group discussion participants have an educational background of grades 9-12. Over nineteen per cent are illiterate out of which 91.7 percent (11) are females.

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from the society. A few visually impaired males and females do sale lottery tickets. However, this is not enough to support them economically and release them from begging. Finally the participants expressed their views saying the visually impaired has to be given access for education to enhance their employment.

b) Social Interaction and Marriage Life

All participants of the female focus group concurred with the view that persons with vision impairment in the community do face various problems. These include serious economic, behavioral and social problems. All participants agreed that there is inconsistent attitude toward persons with vision impairment.

The focus group participants explained that most of the early settlers of Kebele 23 with vision impairment were not able to build their own houses. They were forced to rent houses from sighted landlords and obliged to live 10 – 15 persons in one small room since they cannot also afford to rent houses individually. Participants were unanimous in their explanation that the persons with vision impairment residing in the kebele (zones 1 and 4) have close relationship only with other persons with disabilities and are segregating themselves from the rest of the society. According to the participants persons with vision impairment reside in congested and overcrowded living environment and fail to keep themselves clean. Because of this they have developed a feeling of inferiority complex and do not integrate into the community. Some members of the community also segregate them. On the other hand, there are some landlords who mistreat their visually

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impaired tenants, according to the statements of the FGD participants. They do not allow them to use toilets. As a result of this, the tenants (visually impaired persons) are compelled to defecate in open place at riverside affecting the sanitary condition of the living environment. Some community members express complaints against these people. Such matters easily give way for branding these people. However, said one participant " it cannot be concluded that the majority of the society segregate them".

According to another participant, among the many visually impaired persons who live on begging, there are very few of them who are economically strong and buy or lease houses from others. The economically strong men are able to marry sighted women/girls and lead better and happy life integrating themselves with the community. "Marriage is mostly limited to and take place only among the persons with vision impairment", said one participant. Participants were unanimous in explaining that the incidence of marriage among male visually impaired with sighted females and visually impaired females getting married to sighted males has been very rare, in fact nearly non-existent. However, it was mentioned that adultery among the visually impaired persons is very frequent. All participants stated that there is a wide belief among the visually impaired male persons that a female with vision impairment cannot shoulder home management and child rearing responsibilities. This is another hindrance for not marrying a visually impaired female. The participants concluded that the problem of marriage is more serious on visually impaired females than it is on visually impaired males. All participants concurred that even

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though persons with disabilities have their own "Iddirs," "Mahibers," (mutual aids associations), other members of the community join them in their ceremonies of marriage and burials.

Participants explained that females with vision impairment are much more affected by the negative attitude of the community. One participant said "Because of the problems related to gender inequalities and the visually impaired males chauvinism over the visually impaired females, visually impaired females are more segregated and are victims of humiliation. Visually impaired females are often times sexually abused when they defecate in the open field, since they are not allowed to share toilets".

In conclusion the participants said that social interaction with the sighted community residents is limited mainly because of three reasons. One is the desire of persons with vision impairments to keep themselves aloof. The second most expressed reason among the FGD participants is because of their disability and their involvement in begging many of them feel inferior and often times associate with persons having similar problem. The bad sanitation surrounding their residential areas as well as poor personal hygiene caused by poverty and destitution has been the third reason.

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4.4.3.2. Sighted Male Residents of Kebele 23

a) Experiences of Social Interaction

Concerning the attitude of the community residents toward persons with vision impairment all participants stated the prevalence of inconsistent attitudes. Those people who lost their sights do participate in social lives with the rest of the community, such as "Iddir". Participants unanimously explained that the street across the river towards zone one is made accessible by constructing roads and building bridge to make the physical environment accessible for the visually impaired persons with the collaborative efforts of the community.

Almost all of the participants explained that in spite of all these services rendered to persons with vision impairment by the community, the visually impaired persons are not willing to integrate themselves with the community. Even though the reason for segregating themselves from the community is not clear, it seems that this has happened due to the nature of their work, which is begging. They leave their homes at 4 a.m. and come back during evening. Nevertheless, whenever they meet with any members of the community on their way their interaction with them is healthy.

According to the male FGD participants, the other obvious reason for not integrating with the community is the low perception of the visually impaired persons about themselves. Most of the earlier settlers in this area are persons with multiple disabilities, the majority

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having skin diseases (leprosy). Presently the dominant group is the visually impaired persons.

b) Education and Source of Income/Occupation

Concerning the Education of persons with vision impairment, one participant said they use their children for begging, let alone going to school themselves. Regarding employment status of the visually impaired persons, participants agreed that many of them are engaged only in begging. They have no other source of income.

c) Marriage Life

Regarding family formation the FGD participants reinforced what has been stated by the sighted female FGD participants in that marriage mostly takes place only among those individuals having different disabilities. Such as between visually impaired female and male with other disabilities or between visually impaired male with the sighted woman. Participants stressed that a visually impaired man prefers to marry a sighted woman, because, women traditionally shoulder household responsibilities. However sometimes, a man with sighted marries a woman with visual impairment for an economic advantage.

As a result of this, members of the community living around this area have already developed negative attitude towards the visually impaired persons and are not willing to mix themselves with this segment of the society. The male participants said that the living

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have become causes for bad sanitation and threaten not only their lives but also the lives of the other community members living around this area. The participants concluded that this has become one of the obstacles for the non-existence of deep interaction between the community and the visually impaired persons.

4.4.3.3. Visually impaired women residents of Kebele 23

Regarding their relationship with the rest of the sighted members of the community, some participants expressed their satisfaction and told that there prevails a smooth social interaction with their neighbors. They further explained that their neighbors some times come to their homes to eat and drink with them especially during holidays. However, they say that strong social relation ship exists among the visually impaired group

Other participants expressed that their social interaction with the community is minimal. Most of them expressed that their social relationship is hampered mainly by their begging activities. They said that they spend most of their time in begging starting early in the morning and come back to their homes late in the evening. And some other participants explained that the community segregates them, as some residents do not want to associate with beggars, thus the interaction is severed and becomes a barrier to their integration into the community. Some said that there is no serious humiliation and hatred toward the persons with vision impairment in the community. Some of the participants stated that we mostly feel inferior and do not mix with the sighted.

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All participants expressed that the problems are more severe with girls/women than men/boys. On top of the hardships faced by girls/women because of the sight loss, they are burdened with more responsibilities than men/boys. They are responsible for the care and upbringing of the children while husbands spend their money on drinks. They are responsible for doing house chores. They have to carry their children while working at home and begging in the street.

Overall, what is reflected during the discussion is that there are no extreme situations negatively affecting social interactions. However, inconsistent public attitude prevails.

4.4.3.4. Visually Impaired men Residents of Kebele 23

a) Education

In assessing the opportunity to pursue education on the part of the visually impaired many participants explained that the chance is very narrow. The participants attribute to economic problems for failing to educate themselves and their children. Some said that parents could not allow them to go to school since their labor is needed. On the other hand, it was reported that if some parents want to send their visually impaired children no special arrangement is made for them to easily pursue their education.

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b) Employment

With regard to the employment opportunities all participants stated that for the illiterate visually impaired persons employment is not only difficult, it is impossible. Some mentioned that there are narrow opportunities for literate persons with vision impairment to get employment. Many participants complained that even though the number of the illiterate visually impaired persons is the majority as compared to the literate ones, the National Association still pays due attention to the literate but not to the illiterate ones.

C) Experiences of Social interaction and Marriage Life

In assessing the attitude of the society towards visually impaired persons most participants expressed that the society hate and neglect them. According to the participants this is because they are unable to lead independent life as a result of the loss of their sight.

"We are helped by God, not by people. There are many persons who have negative attitude towards us. Even the Kebele administration is not willing to provide us with identity cards. ...Without the identity card, it is not possible to get health/medical services. These are the problems we face." lamented one participant.

Concerning marriage, the participants stated the following:

"We have problems to marry sighted women. If we ever have the chance of marrying a sighted woman, we cannot withstand the pressure of the community. Therefore,

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marriage is usually concluded only among persons with some kinds of disability or with poor women who are in need of economic advantage generated through begging. After all, we cannot even rent houses and mix ourselves among the society/community outside the two Zones (i.e. 1 and 4). Nevertheless, such an outlook, now, is improving. We can marry, now, to women who are economically weak to share the surplus we get from begging. The most difficult part is to marry from the well-to-do families".

All participants of the discussion stated that women with vision impairment are more affected and more segregated by the community. Several participants said, "Women with vision impairment have less chance to education and social interaction. They have less opportunity for marriage. If they happen to marry a sighted man, they would face humiliation from the public/or from the relatives of the family. The women with vision impairment use the money generated from begging for home expenses and for their children unlike the male partners who squander on personal expense."

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4.4.3.5. Visually Impaired Women at the ENAB Office

a) Experience of Social Interaction, Community Attitude and Education of the visually impaired

These are women with visual impairment with education background of grade 12 and over. Some of them are office bearers at the National Association of the visually impaired.

Regarding the attitude of the public toward persons with visual impairment almost all the participants stated that there are negative and positive attitudes.

The participants said that the public/society considers the eye as a "light" of the human body and without the eye the human body is "dark". One participant said that the public considers the persons with vision impairment as hopeless human beings, good for nothing persons who cannot accomplish anything, cursed by God, dependent on others forever and should be alienated from the rest of the society and some times listen to comments like "preferring death for the blind than to live without sight" from the public.

All participants went on to say that it is the illiterate who have such kind of attitude toward the visually impaired. Most of the illiterates think that visually impaired persons cannot either pursue education nor get trained. The literate/educated members of the society do believe that blind persons can learn, can be trained, can work, etc. However, in spite of the fact that persons with visual impairment can be trained the sighted policy makers are not willing to give the necessary assistance and facilitate the establishment and provision of the training programs.

Most participants stated that there are people who think persons with vision impairment are similar products who have identical thinking, behavior and interest and lack the ability to be educated or trained. Most participants said that even though the opportunity for education is very minimal for both sexes, it is worse with the female with vision impairment.

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Discussing on the issue of " who is being seriously affected" by the negative attitudes all participants agreed that blindness is considered as a loss of total sight by most of the people, therefore, it has impacts on both sexes. They agreed that parents as well as the community prefer having a visually impaired male child than visually impaired female. On top of the gender problems confronted by females, their blindness has a multiplying effect on their psychosocial conditions.

b) Employment

Most participants believe that the public thinks that the visually impaired persons cannot work and should remain dependent. They went on to say that though the literate persons believe that persons with impairment can work, they do not, on the other hand, cooperate with them to give them job opportunities. Therefore, the chances of getting employment for the visually impaired persons are very narrow. The participants believe that persons with vision impairment have better chance of employment in the area of teaching.

All participants seem to think that even in cases where persons with visual impairment have the merits and the qualifications for a vacancy, concerned authorities use the bureaucratic methods not to hire them and for those who succeeded in getting employment, the chance for promotion is very limited. "It is the bureaucracy that creates the barriers for not getting the employment as a result of their blindness," lamented most participants.

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c) Experience in Partner Selection and Marriage Life

"There are different social predicaments confronted by the visually impaired persons during social interactions like weddings, condolence, visiting sick persons, etc," stated one participant. Participants think that many people in the community consider them as a one type of commodity having identical behavior, personality and ability. They don't understand that the visually impaired persons, too, have different attitudes, personality, interest, etc like any other non-visually impaired persons.

There are many people who think that a visually impaired person can be a friend only to another blind person. One of the participants shared the following to the group.

> *"I, once, went to visit my friend with whom I had an appointment. I reached at the place where we had appointment to meet ahead of time and stood at a corner of a road besides one car for a while. One sighted person accidentally saw a blind person passing by and brought him to me and asked me whether I have been waiting for this blind person. Both of us (blinds) were surprised at this unexpected event. This person thought that I could only wait for a blind person."*

All participants stated that marriage is very difficult for persons with vision impairment. They believe that if a sighted man marries a visually impaired woman, his parents, friends and the community will ostracize him. There is a negative perception among the society that a woman with vision impairment is worthless and is incapable of discharging motherhood roles i.e. rearing and taking care of a child, managing the house and other responsibilities within the community like that of a sighted woman because of her limited

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interactions. They also believe that the same is true if a sighted female is married to a visually impaired male where parents, including her friends will not acknowledge the marriage.

Participants explained that the society thinks the visually impaired woman/girl cannot get married, unfit for up-bringing her children, cannot do household chores, cannot go out freely like the men and if she does, she will be exposed to various abuses. Hence, she should be confined at home and remain dependent on others. The participants further explained that women/girls with vision impairment are not allowed to exercise house chores on the grounds that will hurt themselves or break kitchen utensils.

Most participants believe that the men/boys with vision impairment have better opportunities to mix with sighted people in education, employment and the chance to marry to sighted women/girls than women with vision impairment.

According to the participants the society has limited their exposure and considers women with vision impairment as weak and unable to perform what the sighted women do and, therefore, they have no chance to be chosen by sighted men as a wife. Some participants noted that because of this societal attitude towards women with vision impairment do not trust sighted men and usually reject when they are asked for marriage being afraid of the consequences that the marriage may entail.

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4.4.3.6. Visually Impaired Men at ENAB Office

a) Experience of Social Interaction and Community Attitude

These are persons with vision impairment with an educational background of above grade 12 and some degree holders. In exchanging views about the attitude of the public toward visually impaired persons, the participants said that there is inconsistent attitude and it would be difficult to generalize and tell it in concrete terms. This differs from society to society and from place to place. According to the participants, in general the attitude of the public towards the visually impaired persons can be categorized into two:

- Attitude of the illiterate, and
- Attitude of the literate persons towards the visually impaired persons.

All participants said that the attitude of the illiterate people towards the visually impaired persons is positive when compared to the literate people. This does not mean that all the illiterate persons are positive and sympathetic towards them.

Almost all participants said that with the literate people, the reality is different in that literate people have bias against visually impaired persons and deliberately segregate them resulting in psychosocial problems. Again, they said that this does not apply to all literate people.

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b) Experience of the Visually Impaired in the School System

Concerning the attitude of the public toward the education of the visually impaired persons participants explained the various practical and psychosocial problems they encountered during the school years. The arrangement of educational system in Ethiopia does not take into account the problems of persons with visual impairment. They pursue their education straight in an integrated setting with non-disabled students. In many of the schools they attended there is scarcity of educational materials. They share the educational materials of the sighted children. Students are not that much willing to help them. Teachers are not qualified to teach children with vision impairment. They have problems of finding individuals who are willing to read books for them. It is very difficult for them to adjust to the teaching method employed in schools. Such situations are the same starting from the primary schools all the way to the University.

Most participants concurred with the view that the relationship between the children with the sighted and those impaired is not that much bad while both are in primary schools. All participants expressed that the situation changes when they reach high schools where reference books and assistance of the sighted is required to help them reading. All participants noted their sighted friends start distancing themselves for fear of being requested to take notes or to read out books.

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All the participants agreed that the interaction between the two worsens when they reach university. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that the visually impaired students in the university need much assistance from the sighted students. They will be forced to depend on them for getting reference books, lend them these books and assist them to take notes from these reference books. The second reason is fear of competition. The performance of the visually impaired students is stronger than the sighted students. The sighted students feel jealous when they fail to compete them. According to the participants such feelings affect their relationship. According the participants this again cannot be generalized for all sighted students.

Discussing about matters around policy and implementation issues, all participants stated the current inclusive Education policy is negatively affecting the pursuance of the education of the visually impaired as there are no adequate arrangements and preparations made for students with vision impairment. In addition' the present policy of inclusive education is not consistent with the prevailing objective conditions of the country.

Many of the participants complained that implementation discrepancies in the area of education have started affecting students with vision impairment where in some blind schools students coming from one region are not allowed to pursue education in other region's boarding schools.

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b) Employment Experience

All participants stated that there is much discrimination on visually impaired persons concerning employment opportunities. According to the Civil Service Commission policy, there is no such discrimination. The problem is in implementing the rules and regulations stipulated concerning employment. Officials are unwilling to hire visually impaired persons due to their biases that the visually impaired could not adequately perform a job. The participants said that it is due to the biases of officials that such unfair treatments are exercised. This kind of discriminations is made on both sexes (males and females).

Most participants noted that the problem is worse with regard to training in that some Ministries stipulated in their internal rules that one of the criteria to be eligible for training is "full health and being physically capable". One participant said, "This kind of internal rule is unconstitutional. The constitution has guaranteed that persons with disabilities can enjoy employment opportunities on equal footings with persons without disabilities".

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C) Marriage Life Experiences of the Visually Impaired

The focus group participants raised a number of points concerning marriage. They said that though there are many problems concerning marriage confronted by those with vision impairment, it is more acute for the female than the male.

Discussion participants believe that sighted men/boys will never marry women/girls with vision impairment unless they think that they would get an economic advantage out the marriage. There are a few men who marry women with vision impairment on the basis of genuine love. In such instances, their families, friends and the community will ostracize the men.

The participants stressed that men with vision impairment do not want to marry women with the same problem. They need sighted women to lead them and help them at home, to compensate their own loss of sight. Majority of the participants said "if the wife is blind, she cannot discharge her role of motherhood and therefore, men with vision impairment prefer marrying sighted women ".

On the other hand, some participants agreed that it is possible to live with and lead a happy life marrying to a visually impaired woman. Following a lengthy discussion participants seem to think that if there is the wish and the determination on the part of the couples with vision impairment to live together, there is no serious problem that will confront them.

With regard to the question "who has better opportunity to marriage?" quite a large majority of the participants stated,

"Men/boys with vision impairment have better chance for marriage when compared to women/girls with vision impairment. Cultural problems are not as severe on men/boys as it is

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on the women/girls. Men/boys can better mix themselves into the society. They can better learn and get employment opportunities. Such advantages over the women/girls can help them to get married either to the sighted or blind women/girls".

4.5. Discussion Results with Key informants

These are people who have long years of services in various government, civil society organizations and community organizations constituting both sexes. All of them are over 40 and below 60 years of age. A total of eight key informants were contacted. They are a mix of sighted and persons having vision impairment.

The following are excerpts from the discussions held on the attitudes of the general public toward the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired.

a) Education:

According to the information obtained from the key informants the society generally segregate the visually impaired persons in getting opportunities for training or education. But in the north, visually impaired persons have opportunities for church education as a result of the positive attitude of the society toward persons with vision impairment. The literate persons believe that visually impaired persons can learn, be trained and can work independently. Nevertheless, the key informants believe that there are no arrangements to execute inclusive education or separate educational institutions for students with vision impairment.

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The key informants said that men/boys with vision impairment have better opportunity to education and vocational training than visually impaired women/girls. The academic achievement of visually impaired woman enrolled in boarding schools is usually better than the visually impaired boys. However, the girls fail to continue their education and their attrition rate becomes higher due to obstacles related to early pregnancy mainly because of sexual abuse. Church education is closed to girls. Women /girls with vision impairment are forced to stay behind locked doors.

b) Employment opportunities:

As put by the key informants concerning employment "Proclamation No. 101 has brought about some changes in creating employment opportunities for the blind persons. However, there are some problems in its implementation. Concerning the labor Proclamation No. 42/85, which is applicable to business and non-government organizations, the problem of employment of the blind persons is still unresolved."

The employment opportunity is better for the males having impairment when compared to other disabilities. This gives them better opportunities to participate in social activities than the female having vision impairment. Females with vision impairment are forced to stay behind locked doors. Because of such negative experience they themselves do not dare going to the street or go out of their houses. If they go out, they will be confined to begging only but not engaged in other productive activities.

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c) Experience of Marriage Life:

According to the key informants marriage is relatively easy for the men/boys with vision impairment than the women/girls. Since the opportunity for education and employment is relatively better for the visually impaired men/boys than the women/girls, the chance to choose and get married is easier for the male with vision impairment. In rural communities, the men have the opportunity to pursue church education, which allows them for better social interaction.

The key informants stated that in urban or rural settings, the women visually impaired can not enjoy the social and economic advantages, which the visually impaired men can get. As a result of this, the women having vision impairment is considered as a burden only; leave alone to be chosen as a wife. Most of the key informants said that even educated and employed men with vision impairment do not wish to marry a woman having vision impairment. Women with similar educational background and employment status generally do not want to marry men with better social and economic position for fear of deceitful act on the part of male partner incase of misunderstandings in the course of time. The visually impaired male has better chance for marriage because of his strong economic possession

Stating the reasons for not choosing to marry a woman with visual impairment the key informants said that men with visual impairment consider the women with vision

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impairment as incapable of shouldering home management responsibilities and they are considered as additional burden to the household economy. The key informants said that people think that with vision impairment cannot play adequate roles in rearing children and therefore the negative attitude of the public towards two visually impaired couples (husband and wife) is more passive than it is on the individual visually impaired persons. This is the major obstacle for the visually impaired men not to choose the blind women for marriage.

Because of the backward cultural outlook and gender problems, participation of female visually impaired in social activities is very limited. It was explained that participation in the community based organizations such as "Iddirs", "Mahiber" and in settling familial and intra-familial disputes between individuals in neighborhoods are believed by many as being better played by males than females with vision impairment.

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Policy issues:

The key informants stated that there are concerned sectors and organs to get involved to solve these problems. Concerning education, the Federal Ministry of Education and the Regional Bureaux of Education; regarding health the Federal Ministry of Health and the Regional Bureau of Health; concerning employment the Federal Civil Service Commission and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Regional Bureaux of Civil Service and Labor and Social Affairs, etc individually and collectively have great responsibilities to find solutions to these problems.

Regarding attitudinal change, GOs, NGOs, the community and the visually impaired persons must launch awareness raising and advocacy programs. "Policies and proclamations only cannot help in resolving such attitudinal problems", explained one key informant.

4.6. Major issues Raised in the FGDS and key Informant Discussions

The following core issues were reflected during the discussions.

- There are inconsistent or mixed attitudes of the sighted toward the persons with vision impairments.
- Poverty and conditions of deprivation have forced persons with vision impairment to live in substandard dwellings that are not fit for human habitation.
- Persons with vision impairment often times keep themselves aloof.
- Some members of the society segregate these persons with vision impairment, as they don't want to associate with beggars.
- The occupation of the visually impaired, which is begging seem to severe their relationship with the general public since they leave early in the morning and come late at night.
- Most marriages take place among persons having different kinds of disabilities.
- The socialization process of the female children with vision impairment is so protective, restrictive and preference of families/society is to boy children, which

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totally curb their interaction with the outer community thus aggravates the belief that they are burden to the family and are incompetent in community affairs.

- Feeling of hopelessness, low esteem about oneself and the negative social environment seem to force them shy away.
- Men with vision impairment have better opportunity to interact with the social environment compared to that of women with vision impairment.
- Men with vision impairment prefer to marry sighted women to the visually impaired women.
- Finding marriage partner is acute for the women than the men with visual impairment.
- Education opportunity is very narrow since they live in conditions of destitution.
- Employment opportunities are very narrow and their only option is begging.
- Illiterate and literate persons do have contradicting views about blindness and the blind consider them to be sympathized and pitied.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMEDATIONS

5.1. Discussion

5.1.1. Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The subjects of this study were a sample of 400 sighted members of the community living with/among the visually impaired. In order to have a balanced view of these respondents, the gender composition was made to represent an equal proportion (50 per cent male and 50 per cent female) i.e. 200 males and 200 females.

The researcher felt that it would be incomplete to analyze the attitudes of one segment of the society. Therefore, the attitude of the people with visual impairment was also included. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted with the following groups.

- Sighted female community members 20
- Sighted male community members.....24
- Visually impaired ENAB members.....17
- Key informants 8

The age compositions of the sample respondents show that many of them (42.6 %) were young adults of less than 30 years. More that 60 per cent of them have attended formal

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schooling and nearly 64 per cent were not employed (refer to table 4.3). The participants of the focus group discussion of the visually impaired and key informants were, however, all educated and some of which have even reached a university level.

5.1.2. Perception, Belief and Social Interaction

The sample study area was selected for the relatively high concentration of people with visual impairment. However, it was interesting to find that over 57 per cent of the sighted respondents have spoken of the absence of a person with visual impartment whom they closely know (refer to table 4.3). This is an indication of the level of social interaction in a community where the concentration of people with vision impairment is considered to be high.

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The poor state of integration and social interaction has been attributed to two major reasons as mentioned by sighted and visually impaired respondents. One major reason has been the type and working time of the activities of the people with visual impairment. The vast majority of the people with visual impairment were reported to make their living on begging. Therefore, these people go out for work (begging) early in the morning and return late in the evening. They are even on duty during holidays. As a result, they are not in a position to have close contacts and relationships with their sighted neighbours. The other reason mentioned was the negative attitudes of both the sighted and the visually impaired. The visually impaired live in limited quarters of the Kebele. They feel uncomfortable to live with the sighted people. The sighted people also believe that the

people with visual impairment could not keep their living environment clean. The focus group discussion participants have raised that the sighted and the visually impaired very rarely hold joint social and religious observances.

On the other hand, most of the sighted respondents (52.8%) perceive people with visual impairment as useful and productive (refer to table 4.3). This is a positive trend that should be capitalized by development agencies towards creating and encouraging more integration. This attitude has been further strengthened by another positive opinion in which over 78 per cent of the sighted community members believed that visual impairment is caused by accidents and diseases (refer to table 4.5). On the other hand, over 47 per cent of the sighted respondents perceive the visually impaired as useless, dependent and unproductive. This indeed is an area that requires an intervention.

Over 96 per cent of the sighted community respondents expressed that they are ready to assist whenever they encounter persons with vision impairment on the streets since they think that persons with vision impairment deserve pity and sympathy. In the focus group discussions of the different categories of participants it has been reflected that there exists an inconsistent or mixed attitude of the sighted toward the visually impaired. That is both positive and negative attitudes do prevail toward the visually impaired within the community where the impact of the negative attitudes have been expressed as outweighing the positive attitudes. What has been reiterated in the FGDs is that there is no extreme feeling of hatred or segregation although it is an undeniable fact that the level of

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interaction is very minimal .It has been expressed that their poverty level has contributed for them to shy away and keep themselves aloof from the community.

In the focus group discussions of the different categories of participants it has also been explained that men/boys with vision impairment are in a better position to mix with sighted people compared to that of women/girls with vision impairment. Women's interaction is very much curbed, as parents do not allow them to go out and mix with other people for various reasons. One other point which persons with vision impairment complain about and that usually forces them to shy away from mixing with the community is that society does not seem to appreciate their participation. One visually impaired participant of the focus group discussion said" *whenever I go to funeral places and houses of the deceased with my sighted wife, I oftentimes hear family members talking to my wife –why did you bring him with you? Your presence could have been enough! This offends me very much and feel as if they are not ready to appreciate my effort".*

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These and other negative social encounters can be challenged with the active participation of the visually impaired. As put by Peter Coleridge. (1996: 37-38)". "Human beings can be influenced, enlightened, and persuaded, and that prejudices and fears can be altered only by the people who are the targets, change has to start by disabled people taking the initiative by refusing to see themselves as victims, and by being outgoing in their relations with able bodied people".

5.1.3. Attitudes of the Sighted Toward the Education of the Visually Impaired

Laws that guarantee free public education to all children, whatever is the degree of disability, are put in place in many countries. The right of access to education is therefore, common to a number of countries. The legislative measures have resulted in changes in attitudes and better understanding of the needs of those with disabilities.

Oftentimes, laws and policies do very little in changing attitudes of the public and bringing about significant changes in the life of persons with disabilities in general and those with vision impairment in particular unless they are accompanied by practical time framed activities. This may not be done mainly because of lack of human, material and financial resources, and perhaps the issues raised may not deserve treatment, as there could be other competing priorities.

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Attitudes toward male and female and toward those with disabilities, coupled with stereotypes, do affect the attention that these members of the society deserve in terms of provision of services, availing opportunities or creating access to education. Families oftentimes make preferences to boy children than female; non-disabled to the disabled. Therefore, the kind of treatment and provision of opportunities to the children is also based on their preferences.

In this study, over 93 per cent of the sighted respondents stated that men/boys with visual impairment have better opportunities for education than girls/women (refer to table 4.11). This is because society approves that men/boys with vision impairment should get the priority. This has been expressed by about 51 per cent of those who responded that men/boys with vision impairment have better opportunity for education. The reasons for not giving priority for girls include, among others, that

- males with vision impairment are assumed by the society to have interest and better capacity compared to girls;
- the low attitude of the family and the society on girls/women, and
- women are usually engaged in marriage at early age.

This has been confirmed with the consensus of the focus group discussion participants that women with vision impairment have less chance to education and social interaction. The education of girl children is less important for 49 percent of the respondents as indicated in the attitude scale. Of these, 24 per cent were women respondents. This, in fact, is congruent with what Rajah indicated. She said" in many societies it is difficult to convince people that able bodied women need to be educated; for disabled women it is worse (www.pcs.mb.cafneed/disbookl.html)".

Contrary to societal beliefs and what is being practiced in terms of creating access to education to those having vision impairment, over 98 percent of the attitude scale results indicate that education is the fundamental right of the children with vision impairment

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(refer to table 4.23). Focus group discussion participants stated that those who managed to join and pursue their education at the various levels are confronted with countless problems. In primary schools where the visually impaired children join, problems of interaction are very minimal. The situation changes when they reach high schools and the University where reference books and assistance of the sighted is required to help them reading. The sighted colleagues usually take it as a workload and start distancing themselves from the visually impaired. The fear of competition affects relationships. The schools have no additional support to the students. Therefore, in the absence of any kind of assistance from their school, teachers and classmates, visually impaired students fail to be successful in examinations and opt to drop out.

5.1.4. Attitudes of the Sighted Toward the Employment of the Visually Impaired

Employment guarantees some kind of sustainable income. With personal incomes people manage to purchase goods and services and thereby satisfy their needs. Therefore, every young and adult person wants to be employed and lead independent life. The problem of unemployment and underemployment is common in developing countries like Ethiopia. Quite a significant proportion of the potentially active segment of the population becomes unemployed because of disability aggravated by unwelcoming social environment toward persons with disabilities.

The attitude of the sighted respondents regarding the opportunity for employment has been similar to that of education and marriage. Over 95 percent of the respondents believe that

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men /boys have better opportunity for employment. The major reasons for this scenario were cited as:

- better opportunity in education of boys;
- better acceptance by employers;
- better capacity to look for jobs.

Javad Hassan said, " In a society where even well-qualified non-disabled people have a tough time getting jobs, what chance do people with disabilities have? Even if a disabled person is as qualified as his non-disabled competitor, the employer will always prefer the latter (www.pcs.mb.cafneed/disbookl.html.)".

In this study respondents were also requested to express their attitude about the employability and employment opportunities of the visually impaired persons. The responses of the different categories of participants of this study indicate that the chances of getting employment are very narrow for persons with vision impairment. The education sector has been identified as one of the major areas that absorb educated persons with vision impairment. However, it has been pointed out in the FGDs that the bureaucracy to-date creates barriers to forbid employing persons with vision impairment on the ground that they do not agilely travel from place to place and discharge their responsibilities. For those who succeeded in getting employment, the chances for promotion is very limited, as explained during the focus group discussions. The issue of signature is considered as one of the problems to promote persons with visual impairment for higher public positions.

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The attitude scale results indicated that 57 per cent of the sighted respondents believe that chances of employment for people with visual impairment in general is very low. Again more that 35 per cent of the respondents stated that visually impaired young women/girls cannot successfully perform tasks assigned to them and are "useless" and "unproductive" compared to young boys/men having visual impairment. Of these, over 55 per cent were female respondents. However, most people (75%) of the respondents wouldn't mind to work for/with people with vision impairment.

5.1.5. Attitudes toward marriage (family formation) of the people with Visual Impairment

Marriage relations /marriage life has been raised for respondents and focus group discussion participants to express their views and opinions. Even though most of the sighted respondents perceive people with visual impairment as useful and productive, the responses of the sample sighted participants of the study indicated not as many people are willing to get married to people with visual impairment. More than half (54.2 per cent) of the sighted respondents have spoken of their unwillingness. The major selection criterion that was reported to affect the marriage of people with vision impairment is the impairment itself. Out of the 400 samples sighted respondents nearly 78 per cent have identified this criterion.

The vast majorities (92 per cent) respondents agreed in one opinion that among the visually impaired men/boys have better chance of marriage. Almost half (49.3 per cent) of

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the respondents explained that women with vision impairment are not able to carry out home management activities (refer to table4.20). On the other hand 88 per cent of the respondents believe that a man with vision impairment can fulfill the role of a husband.

In the Focus Group Discussions many of the participants expressed that selection of marriage partners and formation of a family with visually impaired persons is oftentimes difficult. Men having vision impairment have expressed that they find it difficult to conclude marriage with sighted women. For men with vision impairment, marriage with sighted women is possible only when the sighted women are under conditions of poverty and when she is definite that the husband would support her economically. Otherwise most marriages are established with women who have some kind of disability and that are under condition of destitution.

Women with vision impairment who have participated in the FGD also explained that there is a negative attitude on the part of the society that a woman with vision impairment is worthless and is incapable of discharging motherhood roles and home management responsibilities. It was further stated by almost all of the women with vision impairment who participated in the FGD that if a sighted man marries a visually impaired woman his friends and closest relatives would ostracize him. It has also been stated that sighted men would not want to marry women with vision impairment unless they think that they would have economic advantage.

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Men with vision impairment agree with the view that most of them do not want to form a family with women having vision impairment. They rather prefer to marry sighted ones to provide them with care and generally to compensate their own loss of sight. The positive attitude towards the marriage opportunity of men with visual impairment confirms what Lina A. Habib (1997: 74)"has said in relation to marriage life of persons with disabilities. She said " Men with disabilities commonly marry- often an able-bodied woman, who subsequently serves as a lifetime career. Such disabled men are able to maintain a family and lead a " quasi-normal" life. In comparison, women with disabilities, unless they enjoy a degree of personal material wealth, would be unlikely to look forward to similar opportunities for marriage and family life (Ibid).

5.2. Conclusions

The main purpose of this research was to understand the attitude of the sighted people toward the education, employment and marriage of persons with vision impairment. Attitudes (both positive and negative) directed toward a certain segment of the population do play significant roles in either enhancing or retarding the level of integration or social interactions among groups and individuals. Similarly, the expressed and implicit negative attitudes toward the visually impaired hamper their desire to develop life goals and succeed in life.

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From the wider perspectives one of the major conclusions that can be drawn from this study is that there prevail both negative and positive attitudes toward persons with vision impairment. This being the case, practical evidences indicate that negative attitudes significantly outweigh the positive ones. This is indicated by ENAB as cited in Bright Hope NO.5 (2001:31) " The most problem of the blind people is ignorance of the society including the blind themselves". The findings clearly reflect that there are vivid indications of poor interpersonal relationships between the sighted and the visually impaired despite the close geographic proximity of the residence of the two groups. This signifies that the social integration aspect demands long term interventions to bring about attitudinal changes.

Conversely, the respondents generally perceive visual impairment as a problem caused by accidents and diseases unlike the age-old belief where victims are considered to be possessed by demons. This is one strong ground for directing future interventions. All stakeholders could take this as a springboard to bring about more positive attitudes and outlook.

Although quite a significant proportion of the sighted sample respondents perceive the visually impaired as useful members of society, when it comes to specific relations and opportunities like education, employment and marriage, the integration process and the observance or protection of the rights of the visually impaired is curtailed as the result of negative attitudes. This is clearly reflected especially in marriage relations and

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employment opportunities. Comparatively speaking, the findings indicate that the visually impaired girls and women are most affected in having access to these opportunities.

Social interactions and involvement in mutual aid associations and community activities are less frequent. Interactions take place only through very rare individual contacts but not in a community wide and formally organized manner. The nature of the occupation of the visually impaired; the loss of self-esteem and lack of courage to withstand the psychological consequences together with some of the unwelcoming attitudes of the sighted community members toward the visually impaired combined with the over all situation of the country seem to have contributed a lot to the limited access of the visual impaired persons education, employment and family formation, which as a result limit their integration to the society. This calls for diverse interventions at individual, family, community and national levels.

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5.3. Recommendations

The enjoyment of the basic rights of the visually impaired and their integration in the socio-economic life of the society requires a combined effort of the sighted members of the society and other social actors as well as the visually impaired in overcoming the traditional beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes. The unwelcoming attitudes and stereotypes made the visually impaired to remain to be seen as helpless, pitiable, and hindered them from benefiting from the positive outcomes of education, employment and marriage life.

The following is recommended so as to assist them to be self –supporting, enhance their participation in the social and economic life of the society and contribute their share in nation building.

5.3.1. Measures to be taken by the visually impaired

- The visually impaired persons must face the challenges of negative attitude instead of letting it to flourish. They should boldly demonstrate their talents/skills to the public by releasing their potentials instead of shying away. Short of this will result in always-negative attitudes of the community doubting such skills of the persons with visual impairment.
- Tolerance and preparedness for any sort of stereotyped negative attitude or comment by persons with visual impairment.
- Persons with visual impairment should readily accept their physical being and should overcome the psychological inferiority complex in order to enhance their integration.
- Demonstrate to the public that visually impaired persons can learn and be trained in any skills and can perform any task that the non-disabled person can do provided conducive environment is created for them.

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- Be ready to teach the public and learn from the public, raise the awareness of the community by demonstrating special personality attributes and courage to break the barriers.
- The visually impaired has to actively participate to empower ENAB in order to have strong voice.

5.3.2. Measures to be taken by CBOs and Civil Society Organizations

- The mass media and NGOs should create positive attitudes in the society by conducting public awareness creation/education and advocacy activities as policies and proclamation do not serve much unless practical programs support them.
- All Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) engaged in the provision of support for the visually impaired and the like should understand the complex psychosocial problems this section of the society are encountered and do what is possible to improve the education, skills training and employment opportunities of the blind.
- Many of the affairs of persons with the visually impaired are initiated or designed and controlled by the sighted sector of the society without the participation of the visually impaired. Without their involvement, the needs and aspirations of these people cannot be fairly and adequately addressed. They need to be empowered to manage their own affairs. Opportunities need be created to allow them to run their own affairs independently.

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- ENAB should be empowered to advocate and lobby for the formulation and implementation of policies helpful for persons with visual impairment.

5.3.3. Measures to be taken by government organizations

- In order to create accessible educational and employment environment and ensure equal opportunities for the persons with vision impairment the enactment of laws and practical measures are essential especially in areas that hinder their integration and access to education, employment and marriage life.
- All Boarding Schools for the visually impaired located in some regions should be allowed to serve all students with visual impairments coming from different regions as there is a disparity of services from one region to the other until such time that the inclusive education program is put in place with the necessary sufficient educational materials and teaching aids for the blinds.
- Physical barriers need be improved in Schools already constructed by the Ministry of Education and the new ones should be designed in such away that they could be easily accessed by the visually impaired.
- Appliances, which are basic and useful for the visually impaired, and are helpful for independent movement, must be also manufactured inside the country. Imported materials for the use of the blinds must be from different countries so that there is room for choice.

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- GOs must launch awareness raising programs for the public in order to change such negative attitudes the public has on visually impaired persons so that opportunities for employment, education, vocational skills training and to easily mix with communities could be created.

- Special assistance should be given to girl /women having vision impairment as they are most affected in the areas of education, employment, marriage and social interaction when compared to that of males.

- Employment opportunity is the reflection of education. One who has better education has a better chance to get employment. This analogy is true for marriage. As per the findings of the study education, employment and marriage have relationship. Those who are educated and employed have a better chance of family formation. Thus giving educational and employment access for the visually impaired helps for better life in the society

- Take legal measures on those individuals who consciously and deliberately violate the basic rights of persons with disabilities /visually impaired/. Such measures can help the effective implementation of:

    - Policies;

    - Inclusive education; and

    - Participation of the persons with disabilities in developmental activities.

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Dear interviewee,

First of all I would like to thank you for your willingness to share your time to participate in the interview.

The interview is concerned with attitude of the sighted community members on the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired. The main purpose of the interview is to collect data on the attitude of the community on visual impairment education, employment and marriage.

I believe the results from this study will be of some use for professionals and organizations working with persons with visual impairment to improve their integration to the society through education, employment and marriage.

Before proceeding into the interview, I want you to understand that any information that you give is confidential and will never be passed on to any other party bearing your identity. To help this you will not be asked to specify your name anywhere in the interview. Therefore, I hope to get your genuine and frank responses to all the quotations.

I thank you in advance for your co-operation

Etenesh W.Agegnehu
Post Graduate Student in Special Needs Education
Addis Ababa University.

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THE ATTITUDE OF THE SIGHTED ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

QUESTIONNAIRE I

Instruction: Answer the following items by putting X mark in the boxes or providing the necessary information orally to the person reading the questions.

***SECTION ONE*: IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENT**

1.1. Zone of study Kebele _____

1.2. Status of the respondents in the Family_____

1.3. Age _____ 1.4. Sex 1 Male ☐ 2. Female ☐

1.5. Religion: 1. Orthodox ☐ 2 . Muslim ☐3C. Protestant ☐ 4. Catholic ☐
5. Other (specify) _____

1.6. First language: 1. Amharic ☐ 2. Oromigna ☐ 3. Tigrigna ☐
4.Other (specify)_____

1.7. Marital Status: 1. Married ☐ 2. Single ☐3. Divorced ☐ 4. Widowed ☐
5. Separated ☐ 6. Other (specify) _____

1.8. Educational Level: 1. Illiterate ☐ 2. Read and write ☐ 3. Grades 1-8 ☐ 4. Grades 9-12 ☐ 5.Other (Specify) _____

1.9. Employment status: 1. Employed ☐ 2. Not employed ☐

***SECTION TWO:-* GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ABOUT VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

2.1. Is there any person with visual impairment whom you closely know? 1. Yes ☐2. No ☐

2.2. How do you perceive a person with visual impairment?

1. Useless ☐ 2. Dependent ☐ 3. Unproductive ☐
5. Others (specify)_____

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2.3. In your opinion how could visual impairment happen to people?

1. When parents do something bad to others ☐ 2. Inherited from parents ☐
3. Evil eyes/possessed by demons ☐ 4. Accident ☐
5. Disease ☐ 6. Other (specify) _____

2.4. Do you think visual impairment is a communicable disease?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

2.5. If you think yes, how?

2.6. How do you see visual impairment on women/girls compared to visual impairment on men/boys?

1. Visual impairment in women/girls is worst ☐
2. Visual impairment in men/boys is worst ☐
3. The same for both ☐

2.7. Give reason/s for the responses you gave for question 2.6

2.8. Are you willing to assist a person with visual impairment to protect him/her from danger (falling, crashing, etc.) 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

2.9. Could you give your reason to either of your answers?

2.10. Are you willing /ready (Were you willing if you were not married) to get married to a person with visual impairment?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

2.11. If your answer is "No" for 2.10, could you state your reason?

2.12. Visual impairment happens to poor people only. 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

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2.13. For either of your answer could you state your reasons ?

2.14. Do you think it is much more difficult for a visually impaired woman/girl than a visually impaired man/boy to participate in social/community activities?

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

2.15. If your answer is "Yes" for question No.2.14 why? Please could you state your reason?

2.16. No one would really consider marrying a visually impaired women/girls.

1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

2.17. If your answer is "Yes" for question No.2.16, please could you state your reason?

2.18. Who has better opportunity for education?

1. Men/boys with visual impairment ☐ 2. Women/girls with visual impairment ☐

2.19. What is your reason for your answer to 2.18?

2.20. Who has better opportunity for marriage?

1. Men/boys with visual impairment ☐ 2. Women/girls with visual impairment ☐

2.21. What is your reason for your answer to 2.20?

2.22. Who has better opportunity for employment?

1. Men/boys with visual impairment ☐ 2B. Women/girls with visual impairment ☐

2.23. What is your reason for your answer to 2.22 ?

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2.24. Which selection criteria affect the visually impaired to be selected for marriage?

1. Economic independence □ 2. Education 3. Beauty □ 4. Lose of picture □ 5. Others □

2.25. Who do you think should be more responsible to give support to persons with visual impairment?

1. Parents/Family members □ 2. Government Organizations □
3. NGOs/Civic Organizations □ 4. Community as a Whole □
5. Other (specify)--------

2.26. Women/girls with visual impairment are not sent to school because they

1. Have low capacity to learn □ 2. Female's education is useless □
3. Other (specify) _____

2.27. Do you think having a child with visual impairment is a burden to parents?

1. Yes □ 2. No □

2.28. If "Yes" to 2.26. why? Please state your reason

2.29. For parents is it preferable to have a visually impaired boy than a visually impaired girl?

1. Yes □ 2. No □

2.30. Could you give your reasons for your answers in 2.28?

2.31. Are there favorable policies that support the education of visually impaired children?

1. Yes □ 2. No □

2.32. Are there favorable policies that support the employment of the visually impaired?

2. Yes □ 2. No □

2.33. Are there favourable policies that promote family formation (marriage) of the visually impaired? 1. Yes □ 2. No □

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SECTION THREE: ATTITUDE TOWARDS VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Instruction: Please give your responses to the following statements by saying " Agree (A); Uncertain (U). Disagree (D); Put an "X" Mark.

3.1	EDUCATION			
No.	**STATEMENT ON ATTITUDE**	**A**	**U**	**D**
3.1.1	Education (going to schools) should be the fundamental rights of children/ persons with visual impairment.			
3.1.2	Spending on the education of visually impaired persons is a waste of resource.			
3.1.3	Students with visual impairment should be enrolled with sighted students.			
3.1.4	Students with visual impairment should be enrolled in separate special schools.			
3.1.5	The enrolment of young children with visual impairment in regular schools will help them to easily integrate late in their adult life in the community they are living.			
3.1.6	For the society education of visually impaired girls/young women is less important compared the education of visually impaired boys/young men.			
3.1.7	People with visual impairment are as intelligent as the sighted ones.			
3.1.8	In schools, visually impaired girl students require special care and support than visually impaired boys.			
3.1.9	If students with visual impairment are integrated in regular schools, they can equally attend class with their sighted peers.			
3.1.10	Regular schools are not willing to accept children with visual impairment.			
3.1.11	Teachers must provide adequate support to students with visual impairment so that they can catch up with sighted students.			
3.1.12	Boy students with visual impairment can easily establish friendship in regular schools.			
3.1.13	Assisting students with visual impairment is an extra workload to teachers.			
3.1.14	Integrating students with visual impairment in regular schools will lessen the stigma attached to disability.			
3.1.15	Girl students with visual impairment can not easily establish friendship in regular schools.			
3.1.16	Special class has a negative effect on the psychosocial development of the visually impaired.			
3.1.17	Visually impaired girls/women are less intelligent than visually impaired boys/men.			
3.1.18	Most students with visual impairment who are in special schools feel that they are socially isolated from other students.			
3.1.19	There are favorable policies that support the integration of visually impaired children into formal schools.			
3.1.20	There is a wide gap between the provisions of the policy documents and their implementation.			

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3.2.	EMPLOYMENT			
No.	STATEMENT ON ATTITUDE	A	U	D
3.2.1	Persons with visual impairment need Aids/ Alms.			
3.2.2	Persons with visual impairment have career development goals in life just like other members of the society.			
3.2.3	Persons with visual impairment (male and female) should not bear higher-level positions in public offices even if they have the required qualifications and experience.			
3.2.4	I wouldn't mind to share one office room and work with persons having visual impairment.			
3.2.5	I don't want to work with or for a person with visual impairment.			
3.2.6	Visually impaired women/girls can be educated or trained for Income Generating Employment.			
3.2.7	All persons with visual impairment are useless and unproductive.			
3.2.8	People with visual impairment are not discriminated in employment.			
3.2.9	Women/girls with visual impairment are useless and unproductive, compared to men/boys with visual impairment.			
3.2.10	Work environment can not be affected by the presence of a visually impaired.			
3.2.11	Women/girls with visual impairment are dependent on others; (burden to the community and family), when compared to men/boys with visual impairment.			
3.2.12	There are adequate vocational trainings that provide better employment opportunity for persons with visual impairment.			
3.2.13	Women with visual impairment are more discriminated than men with visual impairment in employment.			
3.2.14	Employment opportunity is higher for men with visual impairment compared to women with visual impairment.			
3.2.15	The chances of employment for persons with visual impairment are very low in the labor market.			
3.2.16	Having a spouse with visual impairment does not affect the desire to participate in the labor market.			
3.2.17	Both women and men with visual impairment have few opportunities in life to look forward to.			
3.2.18	It would be best for the visually impaired to work in special environments.			
3.2.19	There are favorable policies that support the employment of the visually impaired.			
3.2.20	There is a wide gap between the provisions of the policy documents and their implementation.			

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3.3.	MARRIAGE			
No.	STATEMENT ON ATTITUDE	A	U	D
3.3.1	Women with visual impairment are not able to carry out home management activities.			
3.3.2	A man with visual impairment is able to fulfill the role of a husband.			
3.3.3	Being visually impaired for a man even if he is educated affects his attraction for marriage.			
3.3.4	Visually impaired men have more opportunities to be selected for marriage than visually impaired women.			
3.3.5	My parents wouldn't mind if I marry (wouldn't have cared had I married) a visually impaired person.			
3.3.6	A woman with visual impairment can not satisfy her husband's needs whether he is sighted or visually impaired.			
3.3.7	A woman with visual impairment can care and raise her children properly.			
3.3.8	Women and men with visual impairment can not establish family life together.			
3.3.9	Economically well off women/ young girls with visual impairment do not have difficulty to select their partners.			
3.3.10	Economically well off men/young boys with visual impairment do not have difficulty to select their partners.			
3.3.11	I will not let the marriage break if visual impairment takes place during marriage.			
3.3.12	I am (was) not ready to marry a person with visual impairment even if he/she has regular income.			
3.3.13	Most visually impaired men select/prefer sighted women for marriage than visually impaired woman.			
3.3.14	It is difficult to a sighted man to marry a visually impaired woman because his relatives/parents and friends disassociate him.			
3.3.15	Men with visual impairment are aggressive and harsh when we compare them to visually impaired women.			
3.3.16	Marrying a visually impaired person is not accepted by the society.			
3.3.17	Most visually impaired women select sighted men for marriage than visually impaired men.			
3.3.18	It is preferable to be a visually impaired man/boy than a woman /girl to have more access to marriage in the society.			
3.3.19	There are favourable policies that promote family formation (marriage) of the visually impaired.			
3.3.20	There is a wide gap between the policy documents and their implementation.			

Date of Interview: Date------- Month------ Year----------

Interviewer's Full Name: _____ Signature _____

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES MASTER'S THESIS

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SIGHTED ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED:

THE CASE OF ADDIS ABABA.

KEY INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE II

This is a key informant questionnaire designed to collect information about the attitude of the sighted towards education, marriage and employment of the visually impaired. Your genuine responses are highly appreciated.

I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Date of Interview: _____
2. Sex: 1. Male 2. Female
3. Educational level_____
5. Organization_____
4. Position in the Organization_____
6. Years of Experience_____

II. INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

1. Are there persons with visual impairment in your community? 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐
2. How does the community perceive persons with visual impairment ?

   ---
3. Whose disability is more stigmatized?
   1. Visually impaired women/girls ☐ 2. Visually impaired men/boys ☐
   3. No difference ☐
4. What is your reason for your answer to 3 ?

   ---

5 In your opinion how would disability in general and Visually impairment in particular can happen?
   1. When parents do something bad to others ☐ 2. Inherited from parents ☐
   3. Evil eyes/possessed by demons ☐ 4. Accident ☐
   5. Disease ☐ 6. Other (specify) _____

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6. Do you think persons with visual impairment have problems in getting married to sighted persons?
   1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

7. If "Yes" to 6, when and why?-

   When Why

   ---------- ----------

   ---------- ----------

8. In some cultures /society the community hides visually impaired persons, do you think this is practised in Addis Ababa?

   1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

9. If "Yes" to 8 why?

   ---

10. Do visually impaired women/girls actively participate in community activities?

    1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

11. If "No" to 10 Why?

    ---

12. Who do you think people in your community send to schools?

    1. Women/girls with visual ☐ 2. Men/boys with visual impairment. ☐

13. *Why ?*

    ---

14. In your opinion, among the visually impaired, who has better opportunity for education ?

    1. Men/boys ☐ 2. Women/girls ☐

15. In your opinion, among the visually impaired, who has better opportunity for employment ?

    1. Men/boys ☐ 2. Women/girls ☐

16. In your opinion among the visually impaired who has better opportunity for marriage?

    1. Men/boys ☐ 2. Women/girls ☐

17. In your opinion, who is responsible within the community to take care of person with visual impairment?

    1.Government ☐ 2.NGO. ☐ 3. Family☐ 4. Others☐----------

18. Do you mind to marry for yourself or if your child/relative gets married to persons with visual impairment? 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

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19 If "No" to 18 , Why?

_____

_____

20. What favorable conditions exist for the visually impaired in relation to education, employment and marriage?

_____

_____

21. What is the implementation status of existing provisions in relation to education, employment and marriage?

_____

_____

22. What do you think should be done by the government to improve the education, employment and marriage problems of the visually impaired?

_____

_____

23. What do you think should be done by non-government organizations and civil societies to improve the education, employment and marriage problems of t he visually impaired?

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24. What do you think should be done by the community to improve the education, employment and marriage problems of the visually impaired?

_____

_____

25. Any additional comment on the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired?

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES MASTER'S THESIS

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SIGHTED ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND MARRIAGE OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED:THE CASE OF ADDIS ABABA.

Focus Group discussion Guide

The findings of this study are believed to give insight to those who are working towards the well being of persons with visual impairment and thereby improving their integration through education, employment and marriage.

Before we go deep into our discussion, I would like to confirm to you that any information that you give will be confidential and only used for academic purposes. My name is Etenesh W.Agegnehu, graduate student of Special Education who is going to facilitate the discussion.

1. How do you perceive the attitude of the community on persons with visual impairment?
2. Do you think there is a better opportunity for visually impaired men compared to visually impaired women in society? How?
3. Sighted people use some derogatory terminologies to explain visually impairment. Could we discus the connotations, the meanings and the stigmas attached to such words?
4. Could you also add some of the words used by the sighted people and why do you think they are using such words? In your opinion would it hurt if it happens to any one of us?
5. It seems that the numbers of children with visual impairment who are in the school are very few in number compared to the total number of school age children with visual impairment. Even for those who have managed to join schools the environment is not child friendly. Could you give your view and suggestions in this regard?
6. What do you know about the education of the visually impaired? (Challenges and opportunities) _____
7. What do you know about the employment of the visually impaired? (Challenges and opportunities) _____
8. What do you know about the marriage life of the visually impaired? (Challenges and opportunities) _____
9. If you have ever come across/or heard of a family whose house wife/husband is visually impaired, what can we learn from their life?_____
10. How do you compare the home management of style of the visually impaired with that of the sighted ones in your community?
11. Which one of the sexes with visual impairment is in a better position for the following opportunities?
    Education, Employment, Marriage.

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12. What do you know about how the visually impaired are treated/perceived by office administrators, secretaries, and guards whenever they seek services of any kind?

13. It is said that the social participation of persons with visual impairment is minimal. In your opinion, in which of the following social activities do you think persons with visual impairment have less participation and why?

    1. Wedding and other parities.
    2. Mourning events.
    3. Visiting the sick.
    4. Monthly and early public holidays.
    5. Others (specify) _____

14. In general the sighted are said to be mistreating persons with visual impairment in various ways. Could we discuss this across different settings?

    - At home
    - In the neighbour hood
    - In the streets
    - In public transports and around bus stops
    - In religious places
    - In shops, stores, and other marketing places
    - In schools – in and out of class
    - Other (specify) _____

15. Could you tell about the additional problems faced by the visually impaired women/young girls because of their gender and disability? _____

16. What should be done to create a better and equal opportunity for the visually impaired people?

    1. By the family
    2. By the community
    3. By NGOs
    4. By the Government

17. Do you have any additional comment regarding the education, employment and marriage of the visually impaired?

The end of the discussion

I thank you very much for your co-operation.

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Annex A

Respondents By Reasons for helping people with V I and Educational Status

Reasons		Educational level					Total
		Illiterate	Read and write	Grades 1-8	Grades 9-12	Others	
Out of humanity	N	74	45	105	105	8	337
	%	19.2	11.7	27.3	27.3	2.1	87.5
To have righteousness	N	17	8	16	6	-	47
	%	4.4	2.1	4.1	1.6	-	12.2
Fear of not happening to my children	N	-	-	-	1	-	1
	%	-	-	-	0.3	-	0.3
Total	N	**91**	**53**	**121**	**112**	**8**	**385**
	%	**23.6**	**13.8**	**31.4**	**29.1**	**2.1**	**100.0**

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Annex B

Respondents by Sex and opinion on who has better opportunity for Employment

There is better opportunity for employment of visually impaired		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Men/boys	N	189	192	381
	%	47.2	48.0	95.2
Women/girls	N	11	8	19
	%	2.8	2.0	4.8
Total	N	**200**	**200**	**400**
	%	**50.0**	**50.0**	**100.0**

Annex C

Respondents by Employment Status and opinion on who has better opportunity for Employment

There is better opportunity for employment of visually impaired		Employment status		Total
		Employed	Not employed	
Men/boys	N	130	198240	370
	%	32.5	60.0	92.5
Women/girls	N	15	15	30
	%	3.8	3.8	7.5
Total	N	**145**	**255**	**400**
	%	**36.2**	**63.8**	**100.0**

Annex D

Respondents by Marital Status and opinion on who has better opportunity for Marriage

There is better opportunity for marriage of visually impaired		Marital status				Total
		Married	Single	Divorced	Widowed	
Men/boys	N	223	112	7	24	366
	%	55.8	28.0	1.8	6.0	91.5
Women/girls	N	23	8	1	2	34
	%	5.9	2.0	.3	.5	8.7
Total	N	**246**	**120**	**8**	**26**	**400**
	%	**61.5**	**30.0**	**2.0**	**6.5**	**100.0**

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ATTITUDE TOWARDS VISUAL IMPAIRMENT- PERCENTAGE RESULTS OF THE SCALE

3.1	EDUCATION	Percent		
No.	STATEMENT ON ATTITUDE	A	U	D
3.1.1	Education (going to schools) should be the fundamental rights of children/ persons with visual impairment.	98.3	1.0	0.8
3.1.2	Spending on the education of visually impaired persons is a waste of resource.	5.8	7.5	86.8
3.1.3	Students with visual impairment should be enrolled with sighted students.	78.8	5.8	15.5
3.1.4	Students with visual impairment should be enrolled in separate special schools.	76.5	8.5	15.0
3.1.5	The enrolment of young children with visual impairment in regular schools will help them to easily integrate late in their adult life in the community they are living.	85.5	10.0	4.5
3.1.6	For the society education of visually impaired girls/young women is less important compared the education of visually impaired boys/young men.	48.5	17.0	34.5
3.1.7	People with visual impairment are as intelligent as the sighted ones.	79.8	9.3	11.0
3.1.8	In schools, visually impaired girl students require special care and support than visually impaired boys.	78.0	8.8	13.3
3.1.9	If students with visual impairment are integrated in regular schools, they can equally attend class with their sighted peers.	70.8	8.5	20.8
3.1.10	Regular schools are not willing to accept children with visual impairment.	21.8	33.8	44.5
3.1.11	Teachers must provide adequate support to students with visual impairment so that they can catch up with sighted students.	83.3	11.0	5.8
3.1.12	Boy students with visual impairment can easily establish friendship in regular schools.	77.8	11.3	11.0
3.1.13	Assisting students with visual impairment is an extra workload to teachers.	29.5	14.8	55.8
3.1.14	Integrating students with visual impairment in regular schools will lessen the stigma attached to disability.	80.5	11.3	8.3
3.1.15	Girl students with visual impairment can not easily establish friendship in regular schools.	39.8	15.5	44.8
3.1.16	Special class has a negative effect on the psychosocial development of the visually impaired.	46.3	28.3	25.5
3.1.17	Visually impaired girls/women are less intelligent than visually impaired boys/men.	29.5	20.0	50.5
3.1.18	Most students with visual impairment who are in special schools feel that they are socially isolated from other students.	46.0	25.8	28.3
3.1.19	There are favourable policies that support the integration of visually impaired children into formal schools.	38.5	50.5	11.0
3.1.20	There is a wide gap between the provisions of the policy documents and their implementation.	24.5	64.3	11.3

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3.2.	EMPLOYMENT	Percent		
No.	STATEMENT ON ATTITUDE	A	U	D
3.2.1	Persons with visual impairment need Aids/ Alms.	74.8	7.0	18.3
3.2.2	Persons with visual impairment have career development goals in life just like other members of the society.	89.5	7.0	3.5
3.2.3	Persons with visual impairment (male and female) should not bear higher-level positions in public offices even if they have the required qualifications and experience.	23.3	10.5	66.3
3.2.4	I wouldn't mind to share one office room and work with persons having visual impairment.	88.0	5.0	7.0
3.2.5	I don't want to work with or for a person with visual impairment.	20.5	4.5	75,5
3.2.6	Visually impaired women/girls can be educated or trained for Income Generating Employment.	87.5	7.3	5.3
3.2.7	All persons with visual impairment are useless and unproductive.	12.3	10.8	77.0
3.2.8	People with visual impairment are not discriminated in employment.	32.3	33.5	28.8
3.2.9	Women/girls with visual impairment are useless and unproductive, compared to men/boys with visual impairment.	35.8	17.3	47.0
3.2.10	Work environment can not be affected by the presence of a visually impaired.	48.3	32.3	19.5
3.2.11	Women/girls with visual impairment are dependent on others; (burden to the community and family), when compared to men/boys with visual impairment.	48.0	13.8	38.3
3.2.12	There are adequate vocational trainings that provide better employment opportunity for persons with visual impairment.	41.0	39.8	19.3
3.2.13	Women with visual impairment are more discriminated than men with visual impairment in employment.	55	32.5	12.5
3.2.14	Employment opportunity is higher for men with visual impairment compared to women with visual impairment.	69.3	18.8	12.0
3.2.15	The chances of employment for persons with visual impairment are very low in the labour market.	57	20.5	22.5
3.2.16	Having a spouse with visual impairment does not affect the desire to participate in the labour market.	57.8	25.8	16.5
3.2.17	Both women and men with visual impairment have few opportunities in life to look forward to.	31.8	14.0	54.3
3.2.18	It would be best for the visually impaired to work in special environments.	53.3	13.0	33.8
3.2.19	There are favourable policies that support the employment of the visually impaired.	28.8	59.8	11.5
3.2.20	There is a wide gap between the provisions of the policy documents and their implementation.	23.0	66.5	10.5

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3.3.	MARRIAGE	Percent		
No.	STATEMENT ON ATTITUDE	A	U	D
3.3.1	Women with visual impairment are not able to carry out home management activities.	49.3	21.0	29.8
3.3.2	A man with visual impairment is able to fulfill the role of a husband.	88.0	5.3	6.8
3.3.3	Being visually impaired for a man even if he is educated affects his attraction for marriage.	52.0	15.0	33.0
3.3.4	Visually impaired men have more opportunities to be selected for marriage than visually impaired women.	72.8	17.8	9.5
3.3.5	My parents wouldn't mind if I marry (wouldn't have cared had I married) a visually impaired person.	31.3	26.3	42.5
3.3.6	A woman with visual impairment can not satisfy her husband's needs whether he is sighted or visually impaired.	34.5	20.0	45.5
3.3.7	A woman with visual impairment can care and raise her children properly.	53.5	15.5	31.0
3.3.8	Women and men with visual impairment can not establish family life together.	40.0	23.3	36.8
3.3.9	Economically well off women/ young girls with visual impairment do not have difficulty to select their partners.	36.8	20.5	42.8
3.3.10	Economically well off men/young boys with visual impairment do not have difficulty to select their partners.	62.3	14.3	23.5
3.3.11	I will not let the marriage break if visual impairment takes place during marriage.	89.8	6.8	3.5
3.3.12	I am (was) not ready to marry a person with visual impairment even if he/she has regular income.	49.3	11.8	39
3.3.13	Most visually impaired men select/prefer sighted women for marriage than visually impaired woman.	58.3	27.8	14
3.3.14	It is difficult to a sighted man to marry a visually impaired woman because his relatives/parents and friends disassociate him.	63.3	21.3	15.5
3.3.15	Men with visual impairment are aggressive and harsh when we compare them to visually impaired women.	38.8	46.3	15.0
3.3.16	Marrying a visually impaired person is not accepted by the society.	53.8	26.5	19.8
3.3.17	Most visually impaired women select sighted men for marriage than visually impaired men.	56.5	30.5	13.0
3.3.18	It is preferable to be a visually impaired man/boy than a woman /girl to have more access to marriage in the society.	79.3	15.3	5.5
3.3.19	There are favourable policies that promote family formation (marriage) of the visually impaired.	18.8	64.3	17.0
3.3.20	There is a wide gap between the policy documents and their implementation.	20.0	68.0	12.0

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Declaration

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

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Place: _____

Date: June 2002

Approved by:

Dr. Teka Zewdie
Advisor

_____
Signature

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