

## CHALLENGES EMERGED WHILE PROVIDING VOCATIONAL SKILL TRAINING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (PWVI) IN IBB, YEMEN

Maged Al-Refi<sup>1</sup> & Amani Al-Gashany<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M. Phil scholar – Department of Visual Impairment, Faculty of Disability Management and Special Education, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Coimbatore- 641 020.

<sup>2</sup>M. Phil scholar – Department of Mental Retardation, Faculty of Disability Management and Special Education, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Coimbatore- 641 020.

### Abstract

*This study was conducted to find out the challenges emerged in providing vocational skill training and job opportunities for persons with visual impairment (PWVI) in Ibb, Yemen. It employed a survey design. 45 stakeholders were selected purposively as a sample for this current study, working in Alayn rehabilitation center of PWVI and Ibb University. Data were collected using a questionnaire prepared by the researchers consists of 29 items. A split-half reliability and experts validation was conducted. A quantitative analysis has done using Chi-Square Test. Findings showed that Chi-Square values were significant in most of the questionnaire items. Hence, the major challenges were AT access, lack of funds, absence of proper vocational guidance, weakness of PWVI in Life skills including O&M, absence of opportunities to prove self on job, absence of cooperation among organizations & agencies, transportation problems, the consequences of current civil war, absence of early intervention programs, gap among theory, practice, training and employment condition as well as the discrimination against PWVI. The main reasons are: vocational rehabilitation programs of PWVI are newly started in Yemen without any research base planning associated with absence of vocational education in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs in Yemen. Simultaneously, the strong correlation among these factors -items- associated with the war makes them significantly effective.*

**Keywords:** challenge, visual impairment, vocational education, employment, job, special needs.



*Scholarly Research Journal's* is licensed Based on a work at [www.srjis.com](http://www.srjis.com)

### Introduction

Work is fundamental to the physical and psychological well-being of people with and without disabilities. Compared to persons who are employed, those who are unemployed tend to experience a higher prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders, use alcohol more frequently, and report lower scores on self esteem and quality of life measures. Recognizing the importance of work, vocational rehabilitation professionals have consistently advocated for it as a fundamental human right of people with disabilities. Therefore, job placement of

PWVI at the highest level possible has been central to the mission of many vocational rehabilitation programs (Dutta, Gervey, Chan, Chou, and Nicole, 2008, p.1)

But, as stated by Duquette (2013), PWVI are proportionally much less likely to be employed, even if they have good educational level comparing to that of the general population. In 2006, Canadian Participation and Activity Limitation Survey stated that there are 35% of individuals aged 15-64 who had a visual impairment (VI) reported having a job. This rate was significantly lower than that of Quebec individuals without impairments (73%)" (p.1).

In US, American Foundation for the Blind estimated that 40 to 45% of working-age blind and visually impaired persons are employed (Michele, 2005, p.4). For many reasons the remaining are not getting the same.

Duquette (2013) explained a number of personal and environmental factors associated with work participation by PWVI which have an influence on the probability of obtaining and retaining employment. Personal factors include severity of visual impairment, age, sex, age at onset of VI, presence of one or more additional impairments, behavior, communication, mobility skills, responsibilities, education, work and job search. And the environmental factors include receiving special education, rehabilitation, career counseling services, living environment, residential location, workplace/attitudes and accessibility. Moreover, vocational rehabilitation is very important for increasing access to and retention of employment. Its interventions being focused on personal as well as on environmental factors of a social and physical nature. Early intervention also is considered as a key component of successful vocational rehabilitation interventions. In addition to work readiness, integration and retention phases, a preliminary phase should be provided to teenagers. It is also important to develop an integrated path between, education, work settings, social and governmental organizations and other sectors (Duquette, 2013, p. 1-19).

With special reference to Yemen, Alsolwi (2012) stated that disability is one of the most significant issue in Yemen. It occupies an important place in the developmental programs done by the government. Therefore, there are about 90 centers in Yemen working in the field of care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (PWD). Likewise, many vocational programs are provided for PWD. Ministry of Civil Service has determined 5% reservation of the government jobs for PWD. In reality, more than 5% of the government jobs in some cities have been allocated for PWD in 2009. In Tamar city, 13% of the government jobs had gone for PWD (Alyemini, 2012, para 1), but the attention is not covering all types of disability in

planning for vocational training and employment services. So, most of the employees are belonging to locomotor disability rather than PWVIs; because most of the rehabilitation centers of PWVI focus on the educational, therapeutic, physical and social rehabilitations ignoring vocational rehabilitation (VR) which makes their employment very much challenge specially after march 25, 2015 due to war consequences. Human Rights Watch said "many of the three million of PWD are at particular risk because they can't flee to safety or access even basic services. Likewise, due to the lack of fuel and electricity and rubble-covered streets, PWD have become virtually imprisoned in their homes— particularly those cannot readily move about (Barriga, 2015, para 2-3) so, more than 300 organizations that provided specialized services for PWDs have had to close, many with their facilities in shambles. In many hospitals across Yemen that remain functioning, people with pre-existing disabilities are reportedly being denied access to medicines they require because of the urgent need to treat people injured in the conflict (Barriga, 2015, para 4).

### **Rational of the study**

Work is fundamental to the physical and psychological well-being of people with and without disabilities, and it is very important for financial independence of PWVI. So government of Yemen has reserved 5% of government jobs for PWDs in general, but most of the jobs are given for persons with locomotor disability. Add to that, self employment among PWVI is very rare comparing by other disabilities in Yemen. Many questions arise behind the ignorance of PWVI in planning for vocational training and employment which motivate the researchers to conduct this study formulating the study in the following question "*what are the challenges of providing vocational skill training and job opportunities for PWVI in Yemen?*"

### **Objective of the study**

Current study aimed to find out the challenges emerged in providing vocational skill training and job opportunities for PWVI.

### **Literature review**

Education plays a huge role in individual development and nation building. Today, education is not only important in developing one's intellectual and personal quality, but also an influential factor in seeking employment for PWVI.

Ji, McBroom and Tedder (1991) investigated the career transition problems of young PWVI as they moved from school to work. And they found overprotection by the system and

*Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studie*

families, poor development of leisure time skills, limited choice of careers, and negative perspectives on disability the most significant problems (p.1-9).

Crudden, McBroom, Moore and Williams (2002) explained how blind overcome employment barriers. Blinds were tend to speak at length about barriers as opposed to suggestions regarding how to overcome them. And they were follow consumer and employer strategies for overcoming employment barriers (p.1-46).

Frank (2003) explained how do stakeholders identify the salient information needed for blind to request a job accommodation. And they were accomplished by conducting an extensive literature review and by interviewing people who have experience with the ADA accommodation request process related to employment for blinds (p.1-118).

Kyriacoy (2005) found from his study conducted on 1003 PWVI employee in Cyprus five core areas of challenges and described as Limited job alternatives, Care and Rehabilitation, Issues of accessibility, absence of any positive and proper legal support actions, and need to cope with the stigma surrounding the disability.

Daye and La Grow (2005) studied the barriers to employment, solutions and the types of training or educational programs helpful in acquiring or retaining employment. He found consequences of VI, attitudes and behaviors of potential employers are the most significant barriers. And provision of disability-specific training, adaptive technology, altering attitudes and the provision of better vocational services are the suitable solutions. Also, vocational training was identified as being the most beneficial type of programme attended, followed by disability-specific training and adaptation (p.173-185).

Joseph (2010) explored the educational, vocational experiences of PWVI in college. The findings showed a positive and negative experience related with self advocacy and acquiring accommodation, work related experiences and reactions to VI (p.3).

Munemo and Tom (2013) aimed to find out the problems faced by PWVI in getting employment. The general scarcity of jobs in the country had very little to do with the unemployment of PWVI (p.203).

Mugabi (2012) revealed the most significant barriers to employment faced by PWVI in Uganda are negative attitudes, lack of operational employment policies, limited work experience, low self esteem and limited choices of jobs among others (p.5).

Bell (2015) conducted study in US and found out 37% of PWVI are employed, and PWVI with higher rehabilitation have better employment outcomes, but a gender gap still exists in earnings (para. 1).

In short, while developed countries have done lot of efforts, VR and employment of PWVI still a big issue. And studies have shown that more than 60% of PWVIs in these countries did not get training or jobs. But there were not any study conducted in Yemen. So, it is very much needed to highlight this area in order to find out a path for planning and implementing suitable VR programs and to make the employment of PWVI in Yemen possible in order to create a meaningful inclusive society.

### **Research methodology**

#### **Research design**

Survey research has employed in this study in order to find out the challenges emerged in providing vocational skill training and job opportunity for PWVI.

#### **Sample of the study**

A sample of 45 stakeholders, working in Alayn rehabilitation center of PWVI and Ibb University, was selected purposively including (teachers, trainers, counselors, administrators, staff, parents and guardians of trainees/ students with visual impairment over 14 years old.

#### **Research tool**

A questionnaire, prepared by the researchers, consists of 29 items was used in the present study to assess the challenges emerged in providing vocational skill training and job opportunities for PWVI in order to obtain the objective of the study.

#### **Validity of the tool**

After listing 74 items from different sources and opened questions, tool was given to experts for validation. The item was accepted when it was 80% agreed among the experts. After that, sampling validity has employed. The final form or the questionnaire consists of 29 items.

#### **Reliability of the tool:**

Pilot study was conducted on 10 stakeholders. A Split-Half Reliability method was adopted. The questionnaire was divides into two parts. Pearson's correlation between the two parts was calculated and corrected by Spearman formula to get 0.870 reliability.

#### **Data collection procedure:**

In the present study, data were collected indirectly by taking the help of the demonstrators working in special education department of Ibb university after giving them the

questionnaires, required directions and contacting the administrations for getting permission and appointments for data collection. Finally, electronic copy of the questionnaire sent back to India to be analyzed by the researchers.

**Data analysis**

A quantitative analysis has done using non-parametric statistics (Chi-Square Test).

**Results and discussion**

The present study aimed to find out the challenges emerged in providing vocational skill training and job opportunities for PWVI. After analyzing the data using Chi-Square Test, we got the following findings:

**Chi-Square Test (C<sup>2</sup>) at 95% level of confidence**

S. N	Items	fo			fe	C <sup>2</sup>	d.f	Asymp. Sig.	Rank
		Not challenge	Medium challenge	High challenge					
1	Lack of rehabilitation training centers	11	11	23	15	6.40	2	.041	25
2	Personal attributes of PWVI which lead to negative behavior	4	23	18	15	12.93	2	.002	20
3	Lack of funds	1	9	35	15	42.13	2	.000	2
4	Discrimination against PWVI	0	27	18	15	25.20	2	.000	8
5	Duration of training programs are inadequate	1	22	22	22.5	19.60	2	.000	13
6	AT access	0	10	35	15	43.33	2	.000	1
7	Absence of opportunities to prove self on job	0	13	32	22.5	34.53	2	.000	4
8	The transportation problems	1	13	31	22.5	30.40	2	.000	6
9	Absence of proper vocational guidance and counseling.	0	11	34	15	40.13	2	.000	3
10	Weakness of PWVI in Life skills ( Exposure daily life activities including O&M)	0	11	34	22.5	40.13	2	.000	3
11	Job placement as per the interest and level of the child	2	16	27	22.5	20.93	2	.000	12
12	Absence of (on the job training) &/or apprenticeship	2	20	23	15	17.20	2	.000	15

13	Impossibility for disability specific adaptations in training and employment	5	19	21	15	10.13	2	.006	23
14	Money Identification and management	7	14	24	15	9.73	2	.008	24
15	Lack of awareness about legislations and rights	3	17	25	15	16.53	2	.000	16
16	Inability to follow the rules of the organizations	4	17	24	15	13.73	2	.001	19
17	Rigid administrations and rules in the working place	2	20	23	15	17.20	2	.000	15
18	PWVI needs support continuously	1	17	27	15	22.93	2	.000	9
19	Availability of career specialists	2	15	28	15	22.53	2	.000	10
20	Availability of the facilities and materials required for training	3	18	24	15	15.60	2	.000	18
21	Absence of cooperation among organizations & agencies	1	12	32	15	32.93	2	.000	5
22	The consequences of current civil war	1	13	31	15	30.40	2	.000	6
23	Unemployment as a societal problem	3	16	26	15	17.73	2	.000	14
24	Gap among theory, practice, training and employment condition	0	16	29	15	28.13	2	.000	7
25	Information and communication access	5	18	22	22.5	10.53	2	.005	22
26	Employers exploit PWVI	4	20	19	15	11.21	2	.004	21
27	Lack of disciplinary and encouraging self-employment programs	3	16	24	15	15.67	2	.000	17
28	Early intervention	1	31	13	15	30.40	2	.000	6
29	Lack of researches in this field	1	26	18	15	21.73	2	.000	11

When reading this table, we can see that (Asymp. Sig.) < 0.05 in all items. This tells us that there are significant differences between observed frequencies (fo) and expected frequencies (fe) among all questionnaire items. While focusing on the frequencies, we find that the majority of sample responses were under (*High challenge*) option in items number 6, 3, 9, 10,7, 21,8, 22, 24, 18, 19, 11,15, 27,20, 16,25, 13,14 and 1. So these items are considered the most significant emerged challenges in providing vocational skill training and job opportunities for PWVI in Ibb city. The general reasons can be explained as following: VR programs of PWVI are newly started in Yemen without any research base planning

associated with absence of vocational education in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs in Yemen. Simultaneously, the strong correlation among these factors - items- associated with the war makes them significantly effective.

While coming little deep we understand "AT access" is associated with lack of funds. And lack of funds is a result of improper planning for VR and war consequences. Also, absence of proper vocational guidance can be interpreted to the lack of awareness about importance of VR for PWVI. On another hand, weakness of PWVI in Life skills is a result of absence of AT support and improper interventions. Likewise, absence of opportunities to prove self on job can be interpreted to inadequate VR training, negative attitudes, lack of technology and weakness of PWVI in life skills.

Absence of cooperation among organizations & agencies can be reveal to absence of proper philosophy for planning and coordinating of VR programs.

Transportation is highly problem due to absence of hostels, war, limited fuel, and lack of independence traveling skills.

War and its consequences depletes the resources of all sectors in the country.

Gap between theory and practice occurred due to the diversity of PWVI in abilities associated with unity of training programs and lack of fresh practical information about jobs available.

The continuous need of PWVI for support is a result of inadequate training on plus curriculum skills.

Lack of career specialists is a result of ignorance of VR in teacher education (TE) programs.

Job placement as per the interest is highly challenge due to lack of vocational guidance.

Lack of awareness about legislations and rights. Because it is not included in TE subjects in addition to absence of awareness programs.

Lack of disciplinary and encouraging self-employment programs is highly challenge due to ignorance of VR of PWVI.

Lack of facilities and materials required for training. It is due to its high cost, lack of fund and improper planning.

Inability to follow the rules of the organizations due to rigid rules and weakness of PWVI in plus curriculum skills.

Money Identification and management is also a challenge due to similarities among notes size, and absence of technology,



Items number 12, 17 and 13 showed the majority of sample responses were under both choices high and *medium challenge* with little difference in favor of high challenge. Absence of apprenticeship can be revealed to absence of job itself that is suitable for PWVI.

Rigid rules in the working place. It is due to lack of awareness about PWVI abilities and required adaptation.

Impossibility for disability specific adaptations in training and employment. It is due to rigged rules, diversity of PWVI and lack of independence, technological support and funds.

Item 5 showed equal response under both choices high and medium challenge. Duration of training programs are inadequate. It is due to absence of curriculum adaptation and including VR in school program along with academic program.

Item 16 showed similarities in response to the choices high and medium challenge with little difference in favor of medium challenge. Inability to follow the rules of the organizations. It is due to inflexibility of the rules associated with lack of life skills among PWVIs.

On another hand, items 28, 4, 29 and 2 showed the majority of the responses were under *medium challenge*. Early intervention, Discrimination against PWVI and personal attributes of PWVI which lead to negative behavior like attention, self confidence, mannerism are considered as *medium challenges* due to lack of awareness about early identification and proper intervention, negative attitudes, absence of VR programs in TE in Yemen.

### **Recommendations:**

In the light of findings, we recommend:

1. Early intervention should be giving more importance as it make the success possible in the future.
2. Rehabilitation centers of PWVI should do a systematic comprehensive planning for VR of PWVI based on research.
3. The awareness among the society about legislations, PWVI rights, nature and needs, diversity, role of community should be increased by taking the help of multimedia and to increase the cooperation among the organizations.
4. Provide legislation support for job reservations in all sectors.
5. Provide vocational guidance in the rehabilitation censors of PWVI.
6. Include VR of PWVI in-pre service and in-service TE programs.

## References

- Alyemeni, S. (2012). *Civil Society Organizations Working with Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Yemen: Fund Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons*. Retrieved December 28, 2016, from [http://yehwrf.org/news\\_details.php?sid=31](http://yehwrf.org/news_details.php?sid=31).
- Barriga, S. R. (2015) *Dispatches: With Disabilities in Yemen, Left in the Rubble*. Human Rights Watch. New York, USA. Retrieved December 19, 2016, from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/11/dispatches-disabilities-yemen-left-rubble>
- Bell. (2015). *Employment Outcomes for Blind and Visually Impaired Adults*. *Jornal of Blindness Innovation and Research*, 5(2).
- Crudden, A., McBroom, L., Moore, J. E., & Williams, W. (2002). *Consumer and Employer Strategies for Overcoming Employment Barriers*. Technical Report. Mississippi State Univ. 1-46.
- Daye, P., & La Grow, S. (2005). *Barriers to Employment Identified by Blind and Vision-Impaired Persons in New Zealand*. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 173-185.
- Duquette, J. (2013). *Factors Influencing Work Participation for People with a Visual Impairment*. (pp. 1-19). Institute Nazarth & Louis. Braille.
- Frank. (2003). *The Impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on the Employment of Individuals who are Blind or Have Severe Visual Impairments*. (pp.1-118). Mississippi State University.
- Ji, K., McBroom & Tedder, N. (1991). *Youth with Disabilities: Transition from School to Work*. Mississippi State University, 1-9.
- Joseph, M. (2010). *A Phenomenological Study Exploring the Educational, Vocational and Social Experiences of College Educated Individuals Who are Visually Impaired*. PhD thesis. Ohio University.
- Kyriacoy. (2005). *Challenges in Employment of Blind and Partially Sighted People*, retrieved December 27, 2016, From <http://www.designingsteps.com/challenges.html>
- Michele, E. (2005). *Predictors of Competitive Employment for Blind and Visually Impaired - Vocational Rehabilitation Consumers*. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 99(5), 303-315. <http://www.jvib.org>.
- Mugabi, F. N. (2012). *Perceived Experiences of Persons with Visual Impairment*. Master's thesis. (pp. 1-94). University of Oslo.
- Munemo & Tom, T. (2013). *Problems of Unemployment Faced by Visually Impaired People*. *Green Journal of Social Science*. 3(4), 203-219.