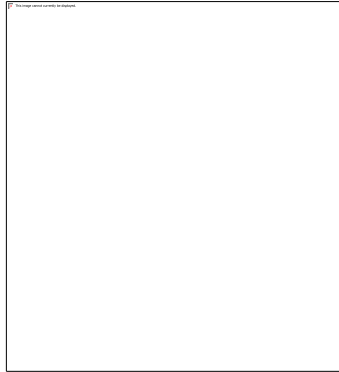**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILIIES IN ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF HATCLIFFE EXTENSION.

BY

PORTIA MAREKERA B210085B

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE IN THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN PEACE AND GOVERNANCE.

BINDURA, ZIMBABWE

MARCH 2025

DECLARATION

Student registration number: **B210085B**

I declare that**"Challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Zimbabwe. A case study of Hatcliffe Extension",** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Portia Marekera   Signature

DATE: 20 June 2025

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE: ....26/09/2025..............................

 Chairperson

 Name Dr Kurebwatira

Signature……………….....................

Date…………........................

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved mother Memory Sango for her unwavering love, support, and guidance that have been my driving force behind my academic journey. Her selflessness, patience, and encouragement have inspired me to pursue my dreams, even when the path seemed uncertain. I am forever grateful for the sacrifices you have made for me and for the values you have instilled in me. Thank you for being my rock, my mentor, and my best friend. I dedicate this work to you, with love and appreciation.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of study is to explore the challenges encountered by women with physical disabilities in securing employment opportunities in Zimbabwe, specifically focusing on the Hatcliffe Extension community. Utilizing the framework of feminist disability theory, the research highlights how entrenched societal structures contribute to ongoing discrimination and the marginalization of this vulnerable population. A review of existing literature reveals that women with disabilities encounter a range of overlapping challenges that cut across sociocultural, physical, and economic dimensions. To gain a nuanced understanding of these challenges, a mixed-methods approach was employed, engaging 60 women aged 18 to 40 through purposive sampling. The data collection incorporated in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and structured questionnaires, allowing for a rich, qualitative and quantitative analysis of the lived experiences of respondents. The findings of the study indicate that sociocultural barriers, including pervasive stigma, discrimination, and restrictive gender norms, are the most significant impediments to employment access. Physical barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure and a lack of effective policy implementation, further compound these challenges, alongside economic hurdles like poverty and limited job opportunities. Ultimately, the study concludes that substantial obstacles persist for women with physical disabilities in Hatcliffe Extension as they strive for gainful employment. Recommendations emphasize the urgent need for the government to not only enact existing laws that uphold the rights of persons with disabilities but also ensure their robust implementation. Furthermore, it suggests that further research is necessary to investigate the effectiveness of government initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Key words

Disability, employment, physical disability, formal sector, informal sector.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

2. ILO - International Labour Organization

3. LA - Labor Act

4. NDP - National Disability Policy

5. NSSA- National Social Security Authority

6. PSC - Public Service Commission

7. PWD - People with Disability

8. PWDA - Persons with Disabilities Act

9. UNESCAP - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

10. UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

11. UN WOMEN - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

12. WHO- World Health Organization

13. WWD - Women with Disabilities

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The largest identifiable disadvantaged group in the world is comprised of persons with disabilities. A physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental handicap of some kind affects more than 600 million individuals globally (World Social Situation 2006). This represents roughly 10% of the global populace. Scholars estimate that between 15% and 20% of European women are disabled. For example, 15% of European women are estimated to have a disability by the European Disability Forum. According to a 2015 World Health Organization (WHO) research, 20% of European women are estimated to be disabled. These percentages, however, could differ according on the nation and the definition of disability age. There are about 470 million people of working age. Every nation has people with disabilities, although more than two-thirds of them reside in developing nations (ILO, 2007). Researchers have noted a number of obstacles, both mental and physical, that women with impairments have when trying to find work in Europe. For instance, in Hungary, stigma and discrimination against women with impairments are prevalent in the workplace. Employment chances are thus hampered by societal stigma and unfavorable views toward disabilities.

Due to patriarchal standards, women in Asia have a difficult time finding work. In addition to having limited access to education, women with disabilities experience compound discrimination because of gender roles and patriarchal standards (Chen, Zheng, Liu, Yang, & Jin, 2016). Employability is hampered by women with disabilities' restricted access to high-quality education, according to UNESCO (2019). Because of gender roles and patriarchal practices, women with disabilities in Pakistan experience compound discrimination (UN Women, 2019). Because of social expectations, women with disabilities in Bangladesh, in particular, have limited access to education and employment (UNESCO, 2019). UNESCAP (2019) reports that 35.4% of women with disabilities in East Asia, 42.1% of women with disabilities in Southeast Asia, and 51.3% of women with disabilities in South Asia encounter job obstacles.

Despite the implementation of numerous laws to protect them, women with disabilities still have difficulty finding work in African nations like Tanzania. There are 34.4 million people living in Tanzania overall. According to estimates, there are 3.4 million people with impairments, or 10% of the overall population. People with impairments, particularly women, are usually invisible even though they make up a sizable portion of the population. They routinely and regularly have their human rights violated. For ages, this has been the standard. In the past, communities did not embrace persons with impairments. They were linked to the devil's incarnation, and their incapacity was also seen as a symbol of God punishing a family for their transgressions. As a

result, having a disabled child in the family was seen as disgraceful. Because of this, the majority of them were concealed in homes, while some were even cast into rocks or shrubs and allowed to perish there. After undergoing an ultrasound and learning they were expecting a child with a disability, women in wealthy nations even ended their pregnancies (Ntamanwa, 2015). There have been several attempts to alter how society views people with disabilities. The implementation of numerous laws, norms, and tactics to enhance society's perception of them is among them. Even with significant progress, Tanzania and many other developing nations continue to struggle with this unfavorable impression.

People with impairments, particularly women, are still viewed as second-class citizens in Zimbabwe. The majority of their rights are denied to them, and they face discrimination. Their gender is the primary reason for their devaluation, followed by myths and misconceptions regarding disability. There are widespread and false presumptions that women with disabilities don't need to work, that their families will take care of their financial needs, and that their primary function will be at home because they are not able to do much else. To guarantee the realization of women with disabilities' right to employment, these attitudes must be altered. In many parts of Zimbabwe, such as Masvingo and Murehwa, community members may view disabilities as a curse or shame. Employers may assume women with disabilities are less capable. According to Choruma (2017), women with disabilities constitute 12.5% of the total population of women in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO) (2020), 53.8% of women with disabilities are unemployed, and 26.4% of women without disabilities are unemployed.

Women with disabilities in Zimbabwe's Hatcliffe peri urban area face numerous obstacles to employment, including a lack of social support, family members who might not support them in their job search, community leaders who might not prioritize disability inclusion, inaccessible workplaces and physical barriers like stairs and narrow doors, stigma and discrimination, and economic difficulties like few job opportunities for disabled people.

1.2 <u>Statement of the problem</u>

In Zimbabwe, disabled women make up a comparatively tiny portion of the formal workforce and are underrepresented in executive and administrative positions. The majority of them encounter a number of obstacles when trying to find work in the official sector. Among the difficulties they face are insensitive workplace buildings, unwelcoming infrastructure, a lack of

technological or working supports, and unfavorable attitudes from coworkers or employers. Other issues include occupational segregation, unequal remuneration for equal work, unequal access to credit and other productive resources, discriminatory hiring and promotion criteria, unequal training and retraining opportunities, and their infrequent involvement in economic decision-making (ILO, 1996). The people who are most likely to experience the repercussions are women with disabilities, their family members, and caretakers.

1.3 Aim of the study

The study aims to explore the challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment in the formal sector.

1.4 Objectives of the study

a. To examine the sociocultural challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment.

b. To analyze the physical challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment.

c. To examine the economic challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment.

1.5   Research Questions

a. What are the sociocultural challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment?

b. What are the physical challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment?

b. What are the economic challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment?

1.6 Assumptions of the study

This study was carried out using the following assumptions:

i.   Zimbabwe's laws and programs do not sufficiently provide disabled women with formal sector employment prospects.

ii.   . Women with disabilities are unable to obtain employment prospects in the formal sector due to discrimination based on both gender and disability due to employers' negative attitudes about them

iii.   Insensitive office architecture, a lack of working assistance, and inadequate infrastructure all hinder women with disabilities' access to career prospects.

iv. There is a lack of Government commitment to create employment opportunities for disabled women within the formal sector.

1.7 <u>Significance of the study</u>

This research will be important to the following groups and organizations:

Women with Disabilities: By expanding job availability, making job application procedures accessible, and promoting reasonable adjustments in workplaces, the research will contribute to better employment chances. Through leadership development, confidence building, and training in self-advocacy, the research will also empower women with disabilities.

Disability Organizations and Advocacy Groups: The research will support advocacy through policy papers, recommendations, evidence-based advocacy, and strategic collaborations. Additionally, through network extension, resource mobilization, and training and capacity building, it will increase capacity. Through collaborative advocacy initiatives, resource pooling, and partnerships with the public, business, and civil society sectors, they will also be working together more

Employers and Businesses: The research will help in inclusive hiring practices through disability-aware recruitment processes, reasonable accommodations and diversity and inclusion training improved workplace accessibility by physical modifications, communication accommodation and digital accessibility. Enhance diversity by diverse workforce, inclusive company culture and innovative problem-solving. They will be also compliance with disability laws through understanding legal requirements, recomementing accessibility measures and monitoring and evaluation

Government officials and policymakers will be well-informed about worldwide best practices, stakeholder involvement, and evidence-based policymaking. enhanced enforcement through systems for compliance, monitoring and assessment, and sanctions for non-compliance. Improved budget allocation by giving disability issues priority, allocating resources effectively, and increasing money for disability support.

Families and communities will gain from increased social inclusion, better quality of life, and emotional and financial well-being. Through media initiatives, community engagement, and training, families and communities will raise awareness of disabilities. The community and family are crucial because they promote social inclusion by participation in the community, which lessens stigma.

1.7 <u>Delimitation of the study</u>

Hatcliffe Extension, is 10.8 kilometres from Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, is where the study was carried out. The study's generalizability to the entire nation may be limited by its exclusive focus on Hatcliffe Extension residents. The study might only look at physical disabilities, for example, and miss the difficulties faced by women with other kinds of disabilities. It also only look at women between the ages of 18 and 40. The study only look at the difficulties disabled women had finding work in a certain era, ignoring prospects for the future.

Map of Hatcliffe Extension.
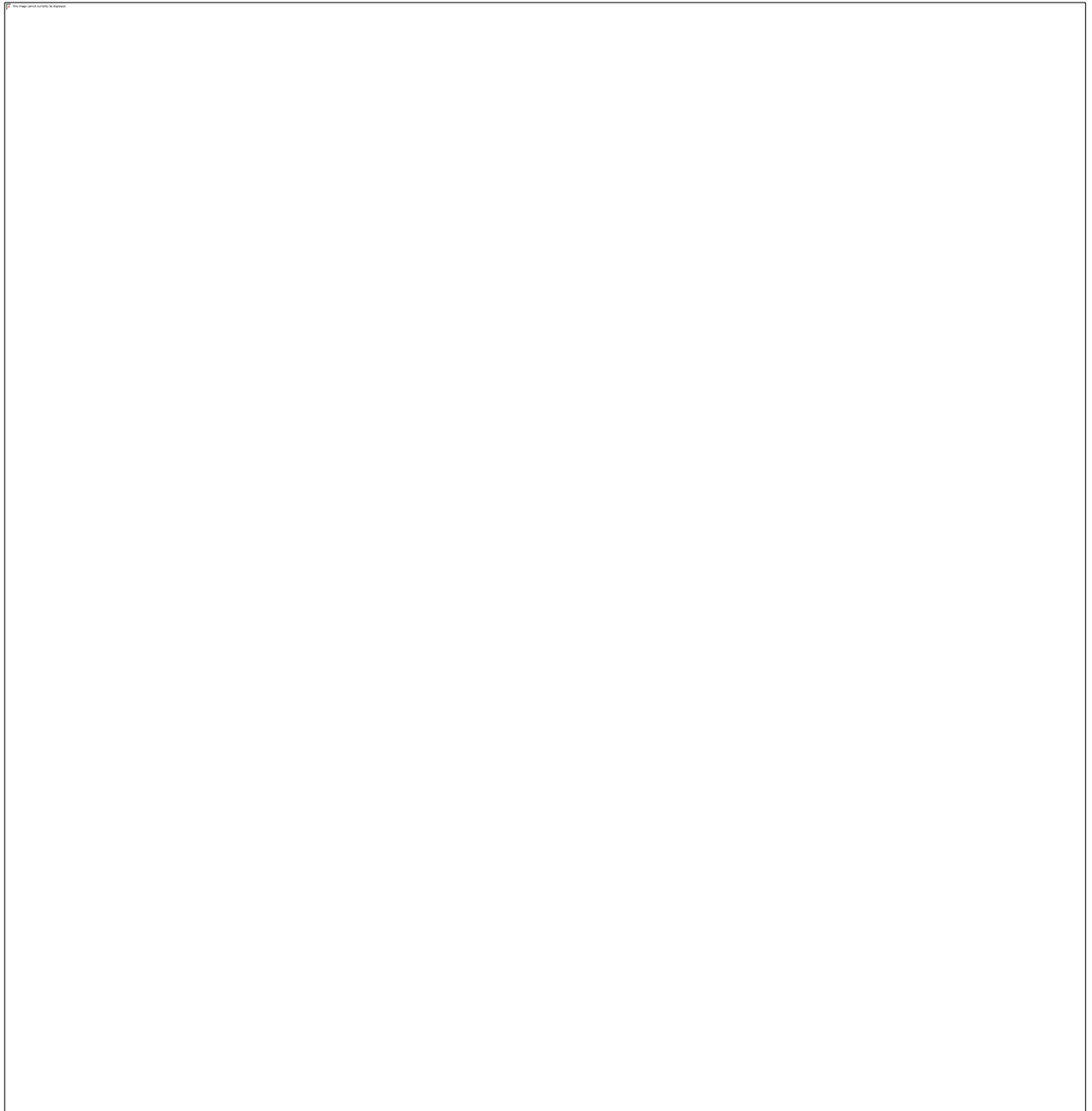
1.9 Limitations of the study

Failure to access to key participants, participants may hesitate to disclose their disability or experiences due to stigma and also failure by key participants to disclose information. The researcher overcome these challenges by promising confidentiality and anonymity, which helps to build trust and positive relationship.

10.1 Definition of key terms

Article 1 of UNCRPD describes persons with disabilities as those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder thier full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Landman (2020) defines human rights as universal standards of behavior that governments and other powerful actors should respect and protect in order to promote human dignity and well-being.

Alexander (2018), discrimination is a systematic and structural issue, perpetuating racial and social inequalities through institutions and policies.

Bratton and Gold (2015), employment is the relationship between the employer and an employee where work is performed in return for remuneration, which highlights both contractual obligations and economic.

Darbi, Hall, & Knott (2018) describes the formal sector as the part of the economy that is regulated and monitored by government entities, characterized by adherence to labor laws and often involving formal employment relationships.

According to Mikton, Maguire & Shakespeare (2014), physical disability is defined as any restriction on a person's ability to perform physical tasks due to a condition affecting bodily function, mobility, or movement.

Proposed Structure of the Study

The research shall be comprised of five chapters to be presented as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter will contain the background of the study, purpose of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, assumptions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, and definition of key terms.

Chapter Two: Preliminary Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A comprehensive review of the literature on the challenges faced by women with disabilities is made. Various theories, models and concepts on the challenges faced by women with disabilities accessing employment are covered. Programs and policies that are there to promote women with disabilities in accessing employment are analyzed.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology, data collection, data analysis, and reliability and validity of the research instruments. Qualitative methodology, participant observation research design, a population from 18 -40 years, purposive sampling and in- depth interviews and journals will used in the study because of its nature.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation

This chapter constitutes the analysis and presentation of data gathered from field research

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations and Areas for further Research

This chapter draws the conclusions and makes recommendations on the best approaches towards improving the challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment. The implications for further research are outlined.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The second chapter examined the concepts and theories of frameworks relevant to the observations that were studied. The chapter provided a breakdown of the numerous empirical research on physical, sociocultural and economic challenges. This chapter went into further detail about the theoretical framework that was used for the study

2.2 Theoretical framework

The interplay of gender and disability is crucial to comprehending the nuanced experiences of women with impairments, according to feminist disability theory, an interdisciplinary framework that combines ideas from disability studies and feminist theory. The idea of

intersectionality, first introduced by Crenshaw in 1989, is fundamental to this theory. It asserts that people have many identities, including gender, race, and disability, which interact to produce distinct experiences of privilege and oppression. Because of the theory's focus on intersectionality, it is possible to examine how several identities including gender, disability, and socioeconomic statusintersect to produce particular difficulties for women with disabilities in Zimbabwe. By emphasizing the social model of disability, which differentiates between disability the social constraints that restrict people and impairment the physical or mental condition, have expanded on this paradigm. According to this perspective, rather than being only a result of personal limits, disability is primarily a social construct that is shaped by societal attitudes and structures. The work of Kafer (2013), who highlights how cultural norms frequently marginalize and demean people who do not fit into traditional ideas of health and beauty, is an example of how feminist disability theorists challenge normative standards of femininity and ableism.

In addition, Wendell (1996) promotes the representation and rights of women with disabilities, advocating for structural adjustments to laws and procedures to guarantee their participation in all spheres of life, including work and education. The social model of disability, which holds that societal constraints rather than personal limitations are what mostly shape disability, is criticized by feminist disability theory. This viewpoint is essential for examining the institutional and physical barriers that Zimbabwean women with disabilities encounter, including inaccessible workplaces, a lack of mobility, and discriminatory hiring practices.

This lens allows a deeper understanding of how societal expectations can limit the aspirations and opportunities of women with disabilities. By integrating these perspectives, feminist disability theory not only enriches disability and feminist studies, but also acts as a powerful tool for advocating for social justice and equality for women with disabilities, pushing for a societal shift that recognizes and values their contributions and rights in contemporary contexts. The theory also challenges normative standards of femininity and ableism, which can lead to the marginalization of women with disabilities in the labor market, as traditional gender roles may dictate that women are primarily responsible for caregiving, further complicating their ability to find and keep a job. Overall, feminist disability theory provides a critical lens for examining how the intersections of gender and disability shape the lived realities of women, advocating for a more inclusive and equitable society.

2.3 Sociocultural challenges

Women with disabilities in Zimbabwe face a myriad of challenges when attempting to access employment, many of which are deeply rooted in cultural, societal, and systemic issues. Cultural perceptions of disability in Zimbabwe often view individuals with disabilities as burdens or incapable of contributing to society.

The cultural stigma of disability in Zimbabwe can discourage employers from hiring women with disabilities, as noted Medayese, Magidimisha-Chipungu, Chipungu & Popoola, (2021). Chitapi (2023), explain that this stigma not only affects the self-esteem of women with disabilities but also significantly influences employer attitudes, leading to discrimination in hiring practices. As a result, women with disabilities in Zimbabwe face a variety of obstacles when trying to access employment, many of which are deeply rooted in cultural, societal, and systemic issues. Efforts to change these perceptions are essential for creating a more inclusive job market. According to Chitapi (2023) women with disabilities are often viewed through a lens of pity or as burdens to their families. This perception not only affects their self-esteem but also influences hiring practices. Bowa (2024), notes that stigma reduces access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services. More so, according to Choruma (2007) boys with disabilities are more valued than girls. Hence this discrimination can lead to violence, abuse, and exploitation. For example, a study by the Zimbabwean Women with Disabilities Forum (2020) found that 70% of women with disabilities experienced violence and abuse. Hence as a result, the stigma surrounding disability creates an environment where women with disabilities struggle to be seen as viable candidates in the workforce. More so, employers may harbor biases, believing that women with disabilities are less capable or productive. The study highlights how this stigmatization perpetuates a cycle of exclusion, where women with disabilities are discouraged from seeking employment due to the anticipated negative reception from both potential employers and society at large.

In Zimbabwe, stigma and prejudice against women with disabilities contribute to their continued social isolation. Employment chances depend on having access to education and vocational training, but women with disabilities frequently encounter major obstacles in this regard. According to Mawonde, Samuel, Nyoni & Muzenda (2023), educational institutions usually do not have the accommodations needed to serve students with disabilities, which causes these women to have inferior educational attainment. Women with disabilities may not be able to fully participate in educational opportunities because many schools lack accessible buildings, skilled staff, or specialized curricula. In addition to limiting their knowledge and abilities, a lack of inclusive education also makes them less confident when applying for jobs. Additionally, Tome (n.d) points out that discrimination against women with impairments can hinder their capacity to

develop their skills and get employment, even in cases where they do receive education. Accessibility and inclusivity may not be given priority in many training facilities, which further marginalizes women with disabilities. A workforce that is underprepared and underappreciated results from this lack of access to high-quality education and training, which feeds the cycle of dependency and poverty.

The employment landscape for women with disabilities is further complicated by sociocultural gender norms. Gavaza, Sadomba & Mwapaura, (n.d) emphasizes the impact of entrenched gender norms on employment opportunities for women with disabilities. Traditional gender roles in Zimbabwe often dictate that women's primary responsibilities lie within the domestic sphere. This expectation can be magnified for women with disabilities, who may be perceived as less able to fulfill both domestic and professional roles. This cultural mindset leads to fewer job opportunities and limited support systems, making it difficult for these women to assert their rights to employment. Dube (2025) notes that these gender roles can be particularly restrictive for women with disabilities, who may be perceived as less capable of balancing work and family life. This cultural expectation can be particularly restrictive for women with disabilities, who may be seen as less capable of balancing work and family life. Chadambuka, Muridzo, Hungwe & Mugari (2024), argues that the intersection of gender and disability creates compounded disadvantages, as women experience dual discrimination that hinders their ability to seek and maintain employment. Moreover, the intersection of gender and disability creates a compounded disadvantage, as women face double discrimination first as women and second as individuals with disabilities.

In addition to stigma, sociocultural attitudes toward disability can create challenges to employment. The study by Mawonde et al (2023) in the suggests that many employers hold traditional beliefs that disabilities are associated with inferiority or incompetence. This perspective not only influences hiring decisions but also affects workplace dynamics, where women with disabilities may face hostility or exclusion from their colleagues. Women with disabilities face double discrimination, as their gender and disability are seen as limitations (Ancha, n.d). These negative cultural attitudes can create an unwelcoming environment that discourages women from even applying for jobs. In Zimbabwe, traditional beliefs and practices often perpetuate negative attitudes towards disability. Disability is sometimes viewed as a curse or punishment from ancestors or gods, leading to social exclusion and stigma.For example, some cultures believe that disability is a result of witchcraft or evil spirits. These beliefs can lead to women with disabilities being ostracized, isolated, and denied access to education, healthcare,

and employment opportunities. To address this challenge, cultural sensitization and education are crucial in promoting inclusive attitudes and understanding.

Though qualitative research specifically addressing the experiences of women in Hatcliffe suburb is lacking, there is a growing body of literature on the employment challenges faced by women with disabilities in Zimbabwe. Important areas that are still understudied include the unique interaction between gender and disability and how sociocultural perceptions of disability affect the employment opportunities available to these women.

2.4 Physical challenges

Women with disabilities in Zimbabwe encounter numerous physical challenges that significantly hinder their access to employment opportunities. These challenges are rooted in infrastructural inadequacies, systemic challenges that perpetuate discrimination, exclusion, lack of support services and policy framework and implementation gaps.

The lack of accessible infrastructure is one of the most urgent physical challenges. Many workplaces, public transportation systems, and educational institutions in Zimbabwe are not built to accommodate people with disabilities. According to the section 3.15.2 of the National Disability Policy (NDP), "All Transport Authorities must ensure that all public and private transport vehicles including buses and trains and associated facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities." However many private and public transport vehicles are not designed to cater for people with disabilities. According to a study by Tome (n.d) the lack of ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms creates significant barriers for women with mobility impairments, effectively limiting their ability to seek and maintain employment. Public transportation is still a major issue, Braimah (2009) explains that the main challenge faced by persons with disabilities is transportation. Many women with disabilities depend on public transportation to commute to work, but the lack of accessible vehicles and services is a major obstacle. According to research by Naami & Mills (2023), the lack of accessible transportation options keeps women with disabilities even more isolated and makes it harder for them to get to work, particularly in urban areas where jobs are frequently located far from residential areas. This lack of infrastructure is a major contributing factor to the high unemployment rates among women with disabilities because they frequently find it difficult to navigate the physical spaces required for work.

Another major obstacle is the absence of support like mentorship programs and vocational training. Women with disabilities frequently may not have access to the training they need to be competitive in the workforce. According to Naami & Mills (2023), in the absence of these

support networks, women with disabilities are ill-prepared to handle job openings, which further solidifies their marginalization. The potential for economic empowerment of women with disabilities is limited by the lack of programs that are specifically designed to meet their requirements. According to the NDP (2021) Article 3.2.5, "Persons with disabilities must have access to information on the provision of reasonable accommodation and the process of requesting it (including at the recruitment phase)." More so, Article 3.2.6 states that, 3.2.7 "Appropriate technical and vocational guidance, training and continuing professional development must be provided to persons with disabilities." However many WWD are not accessing these training as stated in the NDP.

In Zimbabwe, there are implementation gaps and a lack of a policy framework. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is one of the international agreements that Zimbabwe has accepted to advance the rights of people with disabilities; nevertheless, these laws are still not being implemented to their full potential. For instance, the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), explicitly recognizes the rights of people with disabilities, stating in Section 83 that persons with disabilities have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. It emphasizes the right to equal opportunities, including the right to work and to access employment without discrimination. The National Disability Policy (2021), outlines the government's commitment to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring their full participation in society. It promotes inclusive employment practices, emphasizing that individuals with disabilities should have access to decent work and be included in initiatives aimed at economic empowerment. The Persons with Disabilities Act (1992), provides a legal framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities. It recognizes the need to provide appropriate support to enable individuals with disabilities to participate fully in the workforce and society, and encourages employers to create an inclusive work environment. The Employment Equity Act (1998), aimed at promoting equality in the workplace, this Act also addresses the need for affirmative action measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to employment opportunities and to address historical injustices. The Labor Act (Chapter 28:01) governs labor relations in Zimbabwe and includes provisions that protect all workers, including those with disabilities, from discrimination. It promotes fair labor practices and mandates inclusive employment practices. The National Social Security Authority (NSSA) Act, establishes a framework for social security benefits for disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities, to ensure their economic self-sufficiency and access to support services conducive to employment.

These frameworks reflect a commitment to uphold the rights of people with disabilities and aim to ensure their contribution to the economic and social fabric of Zimbabwe.According to the Gender Industry Report (2016), systematic discrimination and a lack of enforcement of disability rights continue to make it difficult for women with disabilities to obtain employment, even in the face of current legislation.The Public Service Commission (PSC), Zimbabwe's biggest employer, hires people who are both cognitively and physically healthy. According to Section 8 of its Regulations (2000), anyone can be appointed "unless he has been examined by a medical practitioner and certified, to the satisfaction of the secretary for health, to be free from any mental or physical deficiency or infirmity likely to interfere with the efficient performance of his duties or render necessary his retirement before pensionable age." The majority of PWD in Zimbabwe are prohibited from applying for jobs in government institutions by this clause, and this study draws on the experiences of WWD to demonstrate how this provision has prevented them from obtaining government jobs.

To learn more about how these overlapping identities impact experiences and employment possibilities, more research is required. The lived experiences of women with disabilities are not adequately captured by much of the current research, which mainly relies on quantitative data. Additionally, no research was conducted in Hatcliffe. Further understanding of the particular obstacles these women encounter in the workplace can be gained through qualitative research that examines individual stories, difficulties, and coping mechanisms.

2.5 Economic challenges

Women with disabilities face significant economic challenges that hinder their access to employment opportunities. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing issues related to poverty, lack of access to resources, discrimination in the labor market, and inadequate support systems. Many women with disabilities live in poverty, which restricts their access to resources that could facilitate employment, such as transportation and assistive technologies. Mlambo & Mpanza, (2024).notes that the economic marginalization of women with disabilities is exacerbated by societal attitudes that devalue their contributions and capabilities. Women with disabilities often find themselves in low-paying jobs or informal employment, which lacks stability and benefits. Limited job opportunities for women with disabilities are evident in Zimbabwe's labor market. According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2020), 70% of women with disabilities are unemployed. This staggering figure underscores the need for targeted interventions.

One of the most pressing economic challenges faced by women with disabilities is poverty. Mlambo & Mpanza, (2024), highlights that women with disabilities are disproportionately affected by poverty due to systemic barriers that limit their access to education and employment opportunities. Many women with disabilities come from low-income households, where financial resources are already strained. This economic marginalization is often compounded by societal attitudes that devalue the contributions of women with disabilities, leading to fewer job opportunities and lower wages when they do find work. Research by the World Health Organization (2021) indicates that individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty, which creates a cycle of disadvantage that is difficult to escape. This poverty not only impacts their ability to secure jobs but also affects their overall quality of life, including access to healthcare, education, and social services. There is lack of research on the impact of poverty on employment opportunities. Poverty is a significant barrier to employment for women with disabilities in Hatcliffe. Living in poverty can limit access to education, skills training, and job opportunities, making it difficult for women with disabilities to escape the cycle of poverty.

Research is needed to determine effective poverty reduction strategies that can help women with disabilities in Hatcliffe access employment opportunities and improve their socioeconomic status. Additionally, poverty can worsen mental and physical health issues, making it even harder for these women to obtain and keep a job.

Discrimination in the workplace is a pervasive challenge for WWD. For example, research shows that women with disabilities are often overlooked for promotions or leadership positions due to stereotypes about their capabilities. Many employers hold biases against hiring people with disabilities, fearing reduced productivity or increased costs (Hunter, Chitsiku, Shand & Van Blerk 2021). According to the NDP (2021), 3.2.1, "Discrimination against persons with disabilities on the basis of disability in all matters concerning all forms of employment, including recruitment, hiring and employment, retention, career advancement and safety and health conditions is an offence." More so, according to the section 3.2.2 of the NDP it states that, "Strive to ensure that a minimum of 15% of the workforce of all organisations across all sectors must comprise persons with disabilities." However many organizations have only 5% disabled people in their companies while some had none.

Women with disabilities face double discrimination, as both their gender and disability are perceived as limitations. Chirebvu (2021) emphasizes that women with disabilities often face workplace discrimination that affects their job security and career advancement. Even when

hired, they may encounter hostile work environments or lack opportunities for professional growth due to their disability status. This discrimination manifests in various ways, from subtle biases in performance evaluations to overt harassment from colleagues. Such experiences not only limit their earning potential but also contribute to job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates among women with disabilities. Sideropoulos, Draper, Munoz-Chereau, & Dockrell (2024), argued that although attitudes towards disability have evolved over time, there is still evidence that people with disabilities are stigmatized and experience discrimination. Employers consider an applicant or an employee with a record of having a disability, there can be conscious or unconscious prejudice activated against the worker.The economic benefits of hiring women with disabilities are numerous and include: bringing women with disabilities to the workplace can boost productivity and innovation; hiring women with disabilities can improve employee morale and retention rates because they feel appreciated and respected; hiring women with disabilities can open up new markets and customer bases; and hiring women with disabilities can enhance the company's reputation and brand. More research is required to examine the economic benefits of hiring women with disabilities and to determine the best ways to promote inclusive employment practices.

Many women with disabilities are forced to seek informal employment due to the lack of accessible and accommodating job opportunities. According to Mlambo & Mpanza (2024), informal employment often lacks the protections and benefits associated with formal jobs, such as health insurance, retirement plans, and job security. Women with disabilities may resort to informal work, such as street vending or domestic labor, which typically offers lower wages and less stability. This reliance on informal employment perpetuates economic insecurity and limits their ability to achieve financial independence. The informal sector often operates outside regulatory frameworks, leaving women vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

In addition to having an impact on their income, their inability to get official employment possibilities also hinders their capacity to establish a long-term career and attain financial stability. In addition, the unpredictability of informal employment can lead to a vicious cycle of insecurity, making it impossible for women to engage in their professional and personal growth or make long-term plans. Additionally, according to UNESCO (2013), many families of individuals with disabilities cannot afford school fees, which prevents them from having the necessary credentials to enroll in postsecondary educational institutions, obtain training, and find employment. Lack of access to schools, roads, public transportation, dependable energy sources, and medical facilities—especially in remote schools—complicates this. The lives of Zimbabwe's disabled population are characterized by this circumstance. This situation

characterizes the lives of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe. There is limited research on the impact of transportation costs on employment opportunities. Transportation costs can be a significant barrier to employment for women with disabilities in Hatcliffe. High transportation costs can limit access to job opportunities, particularly for women with disabilities who may face additional transportation challenges. Furthermore, transportation costs can also impact job retention, as women with disabilities may struggle to maintain employment due to the financial burden of transportation costs. Research is needed to identify accessible and affordable transportation options that can help women with disabilities in Hatcliffe access employment opportunities.

2.4 Chapter summary

The chapter explored the concepts and theories of frameworks relevant to the observations being studied. Feminist disability theory is an interdisciplinary framework that integrates feminist theory and disability studies to examine how gender and disability intersect to shape the experiences of individuals, particularly women with disabilities. This theoretical lens is crucial for understanding the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities, as it highlights the ways in which societal structures, cultural norms, and institutional practices contribute to their marginalization.Women with disabilities in Zimbabwe face numerous challenges in accessing employment, stemming from physical, sociocultural and economic barriers. These challenges intersect and exacerbate one another, resulting in significant disparities in employment outcomes. Focusing on a specific community, the proposed research aims to fill a critical gap in the literature and provide actionable recommendations to empower women with disabilities in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed account of the methodology used to investigate the challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment in Hatcliffe Extension. This chapter outlines the comprehensive methodology employed in this study, encompassing various essential components. It unfolds the underlying research approach, illustrates the research design selected, defines the target population, justifies the sample size determination, reveals the sampling techniques utilized for participant selection, defines the data sources harnessed, describes the data collection instruments deployed, addresses the ethical considerations before, during, and after the study, and clarifies the tools and techniques utilized for data analysis and presentation and assesses the validity and reliability of these instruments,

3.2 Research Approach

According to Ishtiaq (2019), a research approach is the overarching plan that directs the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of a research study. It includes the strategies and

tactics employed in data collecting and analysis, influencing how scientists get and evaluate data in order to respond to certain research objectives.

The study was able to report on a wider range of issues because it employed a hybrid methodology that combined qualitative and quantitative techniques. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be advantageous to the study from this perspective because they allowed the researcher to record the contacts with women with disabilities when they were trying to find work.

3.2.1 Qualitative approach

Qualitative research is an exploratory research style that aims to comprehend the meaning that people or groups assign to a social or human situation, according to Creswell and Poth (2018). It entails gathering information in an organic environment and applying interpretive methods to analyze it. There are a number of benefits and drawbacks to qualitative research that researchers should take into account. Its capacity to offer profound insights into participants' experiences, convictions, and driving forces is a key benefit, enabling a deeper comprehension of intricate social processes. Researchers can examine complex viewpoints and compile in-depth accounts using this strategy that quantitative approaches would miss, (Gerring, 2011) However, because researchers may introduce their own viewpoints into the analysis, there are significant drawbacks, such as the possibility of biases in the interpretation of the data. Due to small, non-random samples, the results of qualitative research are frequently difficult to generalize, which may restrict their relevance to larger groups. Bryman (2016) asserts that because the researcher's interpretations may skew the results, qualitative research might be subjective.

3.2.2 Quantitative approaches

The study used quantitative research approach. A quantitative research approach is a systematic investigation that primarily emphasizes the quantification of relationships, behaviors, phenomena, or variables through statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. According to Leech, Barrett, and Morgan (2013), quantitative research is defined as an approach focused on counting and measuring to understand the public's opinions or behaviors using numerical data. This method frequently employs tools such as surveys, experiments, or analysis of existing datasets to gather numerical data. One of the key advantages of this approach is its ability to provide objective and reliable results that can be replicated, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the findings (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, the study used quantitative research as it enables the analysis of large datasets, making it possible to identify patterns and correlations that may be overlooked in qualitative studies. The use of inferential statistics also

allows researchers to draw broader conclusions from a sample to a larger population, increasing the impact of the findings in informing policy and practice (Field, 2024). Overall, the quantitative approach equips researchers with robust tools for exploring complex issues in a structured and precise manner.

3.3 Research Design

Mogashoa (2021) define a research design as a process for choosing study participants, study locations, and data collection methods to answer the research questions. The term research design describes the overall plan and strategy for carrying out the study, which includes the sampling strategy, data gathering procedures, and data analysis methodologies (Babbie, 2016). It acts as a roadmap that helps researchers approach their research problems in a methodical and efficient manner.

The research will use case study as a qualitative research design. A qualitative research technique called a case study entails a thorough contextual analysis of a particular instance, group, or phenomena in relation to its actual environment. A case study, according to Yin (2017), is a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of a specific group, community, or organization, frequently employing qualitative research techniques. According to Ishtiaq (2019), case studies are perfect for comprehending the complex difficulties encountered by excluded groups because they offer rich qualitative data that emphasize lived experiences. Additionally, by integrating several data sources including observations, interviews, and document analysis, this approach improves the validity and dependability of the results (Yin, 2017). According Baxter and Jack (2008), case studies can shed light on the intricacies of phenomena by offering in-depth contextual information that other approaches might miss.

3.4 Target Population

In research, the term population refers to the complete set of individuals, objects, or events that share specific characteristics and are the focus of a particular study. According to Polit (2017), a population encompasses all members of a defined group from which researchers can draw conclusions or make generalizations. This can include various entities, such as people, organizations, or instances that possess certain attributes relevant to the research question. The target population for this study comprises women with physical disabilities aged from 18 years to 40 years who are residing in Hatcliffe Extension, Zimbabwe. Hatcliffe Extension is a specific geographical area in the Northern part of Harare. The ZIMSTAT report on disability (2022) only provides the demographic data that describe the size (as a fraction of the total population) at the

national and provincial levels, it does not reflect the dis-aggregated geographical spread of persons with disabilities within the provinces. There were no official census figures for the persons with disabilities residing in the Hatcliffe location.

3.5 Sampling Methods

According to Kumar (2018), sampling methods refers to a systematic procedure for selecting a sample from a population with the goal of making accurate inferences about the population based on the sample data. Lipsey, Farran & Hofer (2015) defines sampling as the method of choosing a portion of a specified population so that the sample fairly represents the population. According to Coolican (2017) is a subset of the population that has been chosen and from which data is gathered for statistical analysis. They argue that the choice of sampling method directly impacts the quality of the research findings and the conclusions drawn. The study will use purposive sampling.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling, involves selecting participants who possess specific characteristics that are relevant to the research study in order to gain in depth insights into the phenomenon being studied (Merriam and Tisdell, 2025). This approach is particularly useful when the researcher aims to gain insights from particular groups or individuals who possess unique experiences or knowledge about the topic being studied (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Hoagwood 2015). According to Ishtiaq (2019), purposive sampling enables researchers to focus on individuals who are most likely to provide rich and relevant data, making it ideal for qualitative research where depth of understanding is paramount. This method allows the researcher to identify and select participants who are directly affected by the issues at hand, such as women with various types of disabilities navigating the job market in this specific suburb. According to Etikan, Alkassim, Abubakar (2016), purposive sampling is particularly effective in exploratory studies where the aim is to understand complex phenomena from the perspective of those most impacted. Moreover, because the research is focused on a specific community and demographic, purposive sampling helps ensure that the data collected is highly relevant and contextually rich, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the unique challenges encountered by women with disabilities in Hatcliffe.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size refers to the number of observations or data points used to represent a population and is a key factor in determining the validity and generalizability of research findings

(DeVellies, 2020). It directly influences the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study's findings. Determining the appropriate sample size involves considering factors such as the population size, confidence interval, confidence level, and the specific research methodology being employed. A good sample size is crucial for achieving statistical significance and ensuring that the study's findings are robust and reliable. This study hadl have a sample size of about 60 participants who will represent all the women with disabilities in Hatcliffe.

3.7 Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools or techniques used to collect data for analysis in a research study (Babbie, 2020). They play a crucial role in ensuring the reliability and validity of the data gathered, and their design is integral to the overall research methodology. This study will use in depth interviews and focus group discussions and questionnaire.

3.7.1 In depth interviews

A qualitative research technique called an in-depth interview entails a discussion between a participant and the researcher with the goal of gaining a thorough understanding of the subject's viewpoints, experiences, and beliefs. in-depth interview entails a one-on-one discussion between a participant and a researcher Coolican (2017). (Kvale (2012) asserts that interviews are especially useful for delving into intricate subjects where comprehension of the subtleties of human experience is crucial. This approach can be used in a variety of ways, such as unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews. It enables researchers to modify their questions according to the direction of the discussion while still making sure that important subjects are covered. They give women a forum to talk about their own experiences and the unique obstacles they face in the workplace, like prejudice, societal perceptions, and accessibility problems. Interviews enable the gathering of rich, contextual data that may provide insights that surveys or quantitative approaches would miss (Ishtiaq, 2019). Understanding the lived experiences of marginalized groups is especially crucial since the qualitative information acquired can shed light on the particular challenges and resiliency faced by women with disabilities in this community. This is particularly important in understanding the lived experiences of marginalized groups, as the qualitative data gathered can illuminate the unique struggles and resilience of women with disabilities in this specific community. Additionally, the flexibility of semi-structured interviews enables researchers to probe deeper into participants' responses, uncovering layers of meaning that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges they face. Furthermore, according to Polit (2017), the personal nature of

interviews fosters a rapport between the researcher and participants, encouraging openness and honesty, which are crucial for obtaining genuine insights.

3.7.2 Focus group discussions

 Focus group discussions are a form of interview that involves a small number of participants, who are asked to discuss a specific topic or issue in a structured and facilitated environment (Morgan, 2019). According to Krueger (2014), the primary purpose of focus groups is to gather collective insights and understand the range of opinions, beliefs, and experiences related to the research question. . It entails assembling a small batch of individuals who possess relevant knowledge or experience related to the research objective (Chisango & Marongwe 2018). This method allows researchers to capture the social context in which participants' views are formed.

Focus group discussions are particularly suitable for this study because they facilitate the exploration of collective experiences and shared narratives that can illuminate the complexities of this issue. According to Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2014), focus groups provide a dynamic environment where participants can engage in dialogue, allowing researchers to capture a range of perspectives on a specific topic. This interaction can lead to the emergence of themes and insights that might not surface in individual interviews, as participants build upon each other's comments and experiences. Moreover, as highlighted by Kitzinger and Wood (2019), focus groups are effective for exploring sensitive subjects because they create a supportive atmosphere where participants may feel more comfortable discussing their challenges in a group setting, especially when they share similar experiences. Additionally, focus groups can uncover the social dynamics and community norms that shape the experiences of these women, providing context that enriches the analysis (Barbour, 2014). By engaging women with disabilities in a focused discussion, researchers can gain deeper insights into their lived realities, including how intersecting factors such as race, class, and education impact their employment prospects. Furthermore, the flexibility of focus group discussions allows for the exploration of unexpected topics, giving voice to issues that participants feel are important to address (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

3.7.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire consists of a list of inquiries created to ask respondents a series of questions and gather their responses regarding the subject of the study (Weyant 2022). One tool being employed in this instance is a questionnaire guide. It is described as a research instrument composed of several questions or other types of cues meant to extract information from a reply

(Colella, 2018). The questionnaire was created using the study's research objectives and research questions. A self-administered questionnaire was employed in this investigation. In this instance, the respondents complete the questionnaire, with the researcher's help.

3.8 Data Analysis and Data Presentation

3.8.1 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information, inform conclusions, and support decision-making (Larose & Larose 2019). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013), data analysis involves organizing and interpreting data to identify patterns, relationships, and trends that inform research questions. It encompasses various methods, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, each suited to different types of data and research objectives. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative information utilizing both open-ended and closed-ended questions that were to be assessed. In qualitative research, data analysis may involve thematic analysis or coding to derive insights from textual or visual data, while quantitative analysis often employs statistical techniques to test hypotheses and evaluate numerical data (Babbie, 2016). Overall, data analysis is a critical component of the research process, enabling researchers to transform raw data into actionable knowledge and inform decision-making.

Initially, all in-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed verbatim to ensure the accurate capture of participants' voices. The researcher will then employ thematic analysis to identify and analyze patterns within the qualitative data, beginning with familiarization through repeated readings of the transcripts, followed by initial coding to highlight significant pieces of information related to the research questions. These codes will be grouped into broader themes such as physical economic, social and cultural challenges before reviewing and refining them to ensure they truly represent the data and reflect participants' experiences.

Finally in quantitative analysis, data have been analyzed through using charts, tables, graphs, and statistics like percentages, ratios, proportions, and frequencies. Content analysis was also done for the qualitative data, and data triangulation was accustomed to analyze the information at the same time from all sources. Direct quotes were used for presentation.

3.8.2 Data Presentation

Data presentation is the process of transforming data into a format that is easily comprehensible, using a range of techniques, including data visualization, reporting, and storytelling (Larose &

Larose 2019). According to Tufte (1983) effective data presentation allows information to be conveyed clearly and efficiently, enabling viewers to grasp complex data quickly. It involves selecting appropriate formats such as tables, charts, graphs, or narrative summaries that enhance understanding and facilitate interpretation of the data. According to Few (2009), good data presentation not only highlights key trends and patterns but also ensures that the visualizations are accessible and engaging, allowing the audience to make informed decisions based on the presented information. Overall, data presentation is a crucial aspect of the research process, as it transforms raw data into comprehensible formats that enhance communication and understanding in both academic and practical contexts. The presentation conclude with a summary of key insights, emphasizing their significance for policy and practice, and will highlight recommendations aimed at informing stakeholders and advocating for necessary changes. Supplementary materials, such as full transcripts of interviews or detailed descriptions of focus group discussions, may be included as appendices for those interested in exploring the data more deeply without overwhelming the main text.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in qualitative research are paramount, as they not only protect the rights and dignity of individuals but also enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings such as:

3.9.1 Informed consent

Getting informed permission from subjects is one of the main ethical issues in research. In order for participants to give their informed consent, Creswell & Gilmour (2014) states that they must be given sufficient information about the study's goals, methods, possible dangers, and advantages so they may decide whether or not to participate. The researcher must communicate in a clear and open manner with participants in the Hatcliffe study about women with impairments, making sure they are aware of their freedom to leave the study at any moment without facing repercussions. To guarantee understanding, the researcher will speak simply and offer extra assistance if needed, especially for participants who might have cognitive or communication issues.

3.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Another important ethical factor is confidentiality. Participants need to have confidence that their identities and private data will be kept safe during the whole study. According to Liamputtong (2006), keeping information private fosters trust between participants and the researcher. The researcher take steps including limiting access to identifiable information,

securely storing data, and providing pseudonyms. Participants were given a clear confidentiality agreement that guarantees their answers will remain anonymous in any publications or reports that come out of the study.

3.9.3 Sensitivity to vulnerable populations

Researching issues related to disability and employment often involves engaging with vulnerable populations. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) emphasize the importance of being sensitive to the unique experiences and challenges faced by these individuals. The researcher create a safe and supportive environment during interviews and focus groups, recognizing the potential emotional weight of discussing personal challenges. This includes being attentive to participants' comfort levels and allowing for breaks or the option to skip questions that may be distressing.

3.9.4 Encouraging open ddisclosure

To facilitate open and honest disclosure, the researcher has employed several strategies aimed at reducing participants' fears about sharing their experiences. First, building rapport is essential. According to Rubin and Bellamy (2012), establishing a trusting relationship between the researcher and participants can encourage openness. The researcher will approach each interaction with empathy, actively listening and validating participants' feelings and experiences. Additionally, the researcher will emphasize the importance of the participants' voices in shaping understanding and policy related to disability and employment.Framing the research as an opportunity for participants to contribute to positive change can empower them and lessen apprehension about sharing sensitive information. The researcher may also provide information about how the data was used to advocate for improved employment conditions for women with disabilities, reinforcing the idea that their contributions are valuable and necessary.

3.9.5 Ethical review and oversight

Finally, ethical oversight is crucial to ensuring that the research adheres to established ethical standards. This external review serves as a safeguard, ensuring that ethical considerations are thoroughly addressed and that the rights of participants are prioritized throughout the research process (Beauchamp and Childress, 1994)

3.10 Validity and Reliability

3.10.1 Validity

The degree to which a measurement tool accurately measures the concept or construct it is intended to measure is known as validity (Lub, 2015). To ensure that the data collection tools

are based on established research, the researcher will first conduct a thorough literature review to identify and adapt existing validated instruments relevant to the study. Additionally, the researcher will establish clear operational definitions for all key constructs to ensure that participants understand the questions being asked. The researcher will also apply triangulation by using multiple data sources, including focus groups, interviews, and secondary data to enhance construct validity and corroborate findings. By putting these measures into practice, the researcher hopes to produce valid findings that accurately reflect the difficulties faced by women with disabilities in obtaining employment. Because it guarantees that the results may be applied to different populations and circumstances, validity is essential in qualitative research. (Hashimov, 2015), validity is necessary to guarantee that research findings may be applied to different groups and environments. This is so that the research findings can be used more widely and are not limited to the specific demographic or area under study. Lub (2015) asserts that validity is necessary to demonstrate the reliability and validity of study findings. Validity guarantees that the research tool measures what it is intended to measure and that bias or chance did not produce the results. Therefore, in domains like healthcare, education, and social policy, study findings may be inaccurate or misleading if they lack validity.

3.10.2 Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability refers to making sure that the results accurately and consistently represent the experiences and viewpoints of the participants (Sorsa, Kiikkala, & Åstedt-Kurki 2015). To ensure uniformity in the way data is collected, the researcher will employ standardized data gathering techniques, such as focus group protocols and structured interview guidelines. In order to ensure that results are not exclusively reliant on one method, the researcher will additionally triangulate findings using a variety of data sources, such as focus groups, interviews, and secondary data. Reliability will be further enhanced by peer debriefing and regular reflection on the study process, which will make it possible to spot any biases and inconsistent data interpretation. With the use of these strategies, the researcher hopes to get trustworthy results that fairly represent the experiences of women with disabilities in the job market. Research findings must be accurate, consistent, and representative of the actual condition of the phenomenon under study in order to be considered reliable. Reliability is important in research because it guarantees that the measurement tool is reliable and consistent and that the results are not the result of chance or error (Kline, 2015). Furthermore, the ability to apply research findings in practice and to generalize them to different populations and environments depends on reliability. According to DeVellis (2015), reliability is critical in

research because it ensures that the findings are consistent and dependable, and that they can be transferred to other contexts and populations.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to investigate the challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment in Hatcliffe, employing a qualitative approach to capture the nuanced experiences of participants. The study utilizes in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, with a purposive sampling strategy to recruit a diverse range of women with disabilities, ensuring rich and varied narratives. Data collection employs semi-structured interview guides that facilitate open-ended responses, conducted in safe environments to encourage honest dialogue. Thematic analysis is used for data analysis, involving coding to identify recurring themes and patterns, while triangulation incorporates secondary data, such as relevant statistics and policy documents, to enhance context and depth. Ethical considerations are prioritized, focusing on informed consent, confidentiality, and participant well-being, with efforts made to mitigate biases and reflect on the researcher's role. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methods employed to gain meaningful insights into the barriers and facilitating factors affecting women with disabilities in their pursuit of employment, ultimately aiming to inform policies and practices for improving their access to work.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings that are in line with the study objectives, on the challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Hatcliffe Extension. The objectives were analysing the physical challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment, examining the sociocultural challenges and the economic challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Zimbabwe. Information was displayed as pie charts, bar graphs, tables and also, in depth interviews, focus group discussions and direct quotations were used to present qualitative data. The data is to be presented under themes derived from research objectives. The researcher used thematic approach to analyse data from in depth interviews and focus group discussions. Through the use of thematic analysis, researcher identified key themes from participant responses. Through a rigorous process of transcription analysis and note-taking, themes were developed and refined. Key features were extracted from the transcripts and grouped together, allowing the researcher to categorize and describe the data in a systematic and meaningful way.

4.2 Demographic Distribution Data

The demographic profile of respondents is crucial in research studies because it helps with data analysis and the development of conclusions based on data findings. This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in conducting the study. Age, marital status, educational attainment, and disability category are the main characteristics taken into consideration.

4.2.1 Age

Table 4.1 Age **(No. 60)**

Age group in years	Frequency	Percentage
18- 22	18	30%
22- 26	15	25%
26- 30	10	17%
30- 34	12	20%
34- 40	5	8%
Total	60	100%

Most of the respondents 18 (30%) from table 4.1 were between the ages of 18 and 22, while the least number of respondents (8.33%) were between the ages of 34 and 40. Women of different ages have differing levels of life experience, education, and work history, therefore it's critical to get data from these groups.

4.2.3   Level of education

Table 4.2. Level of education (No. 60)

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	40	67%
'O' level	15	25%
'A' level	4	7%
Tertiary	1	2%
Total	60	100%

Most respondents 40 (67%) from table 4.2 had completed primary while the least 1 (2%) had completed tertiary level. This diversity in educational backgrounds offered unique insights and

experiences that enrich the data. Educational level often determines the type and quality of employment opportunities available. Analyzing data from different educational levels also helps identify how women with physical disabilities navigate the job market and how education influences employment opportunities and challenges.

4.2.4 Employment status
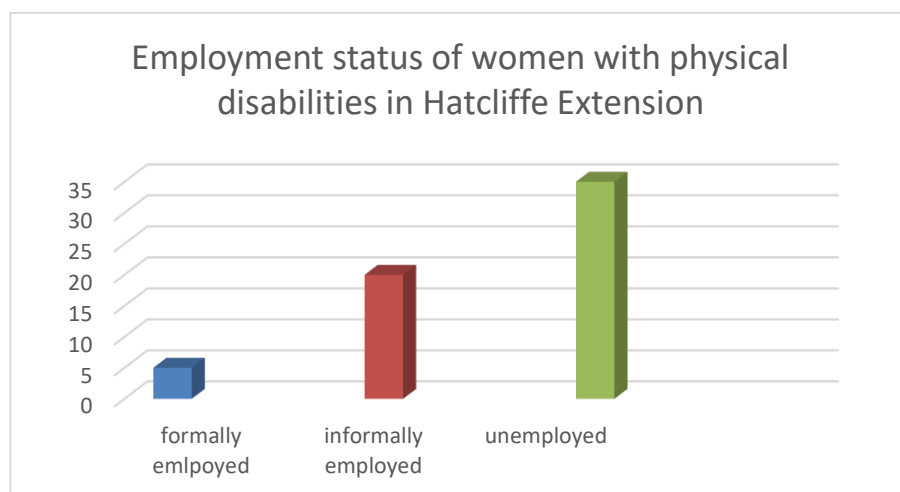
Fig.4. 1 employment status. (No. 60)

The majority of respondents 35 (44.5%) from fig 4.1 reported being unemployed, while 20 (44.4%) were informally employed and the least 5 (11.1%) are formally employed. Collecting data from people with different employment statuses ensures that the sample is representative of the population. More so, analyzing data from different employment status groups identifies specific challenges to employment, such as physical, sociocultural, or economic challenges.

4.2.5 Marital status
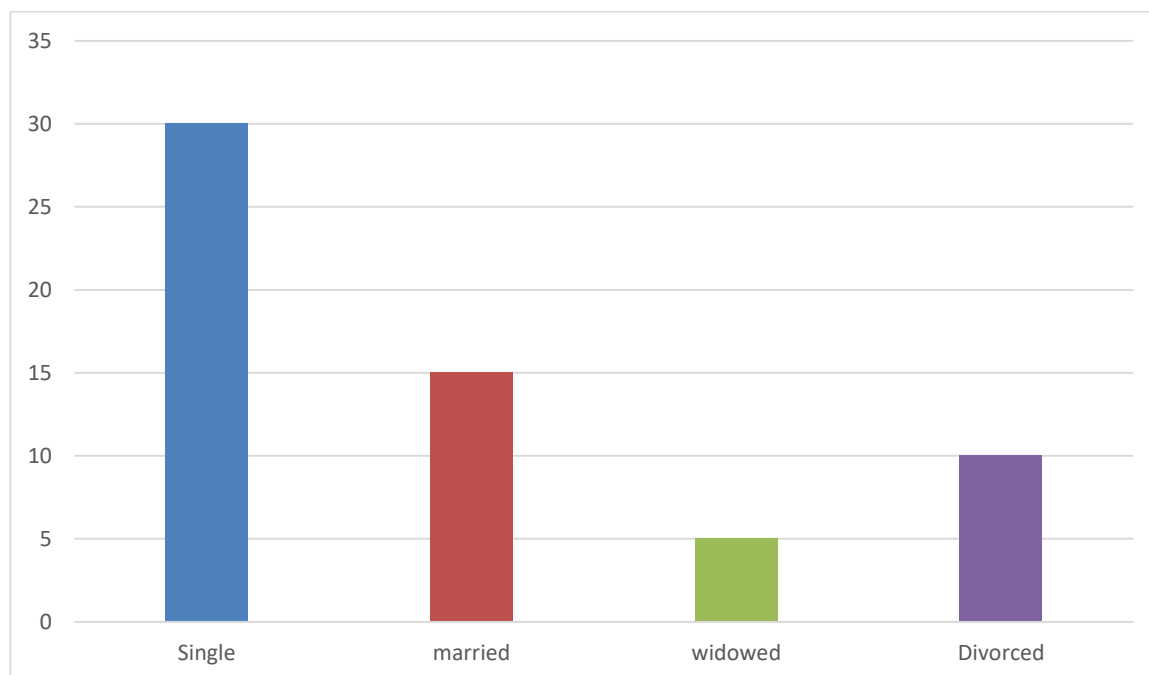
*FIG4. 2, marital status. (*__No. 60)__

The majority of respondents 30 (50%) were single, while the least 5 (8.33%) were widowed. Collecting information from people with different marital statuses is important, as it can influence their perspectives on the challenges that they face on accessing employment.

4.2.5 Type of physical disability
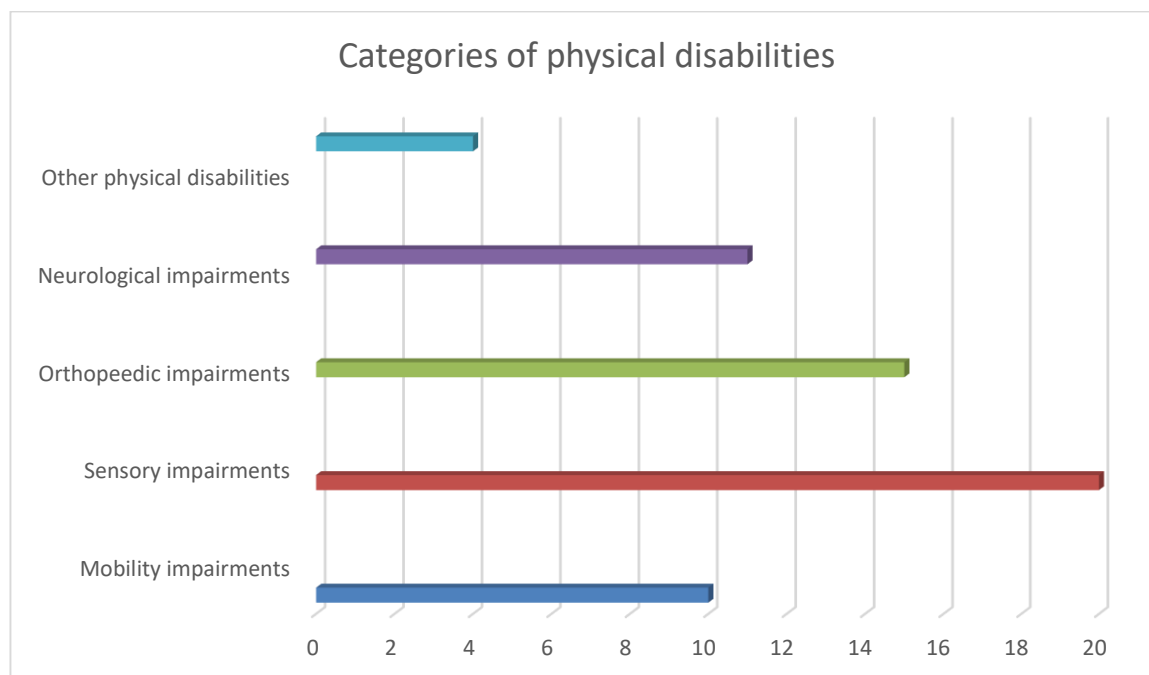
Fig 4.3, types of physical disability. **(No. 60)**

The majority of respondents 20 (33.33%) had sensory impairments and few had 4 (6.67%) had other physical disabilities such as respiratory conditions and chronic pains that affects daily life. Collecting information from people with different physical disabilities is important, as it can influence the researcher's perspectives on the challenges that they face on accessing employment

4.3 Challenges being faced by WWDs in accessing employment in Hatcliffe Extension.

Basing on fig 4.4 below, most women 28 (47%) are facing sociocultural challenges in accessing employment, followed by physical changes 20 (33%) and the least 12 (20%) economic challenges.
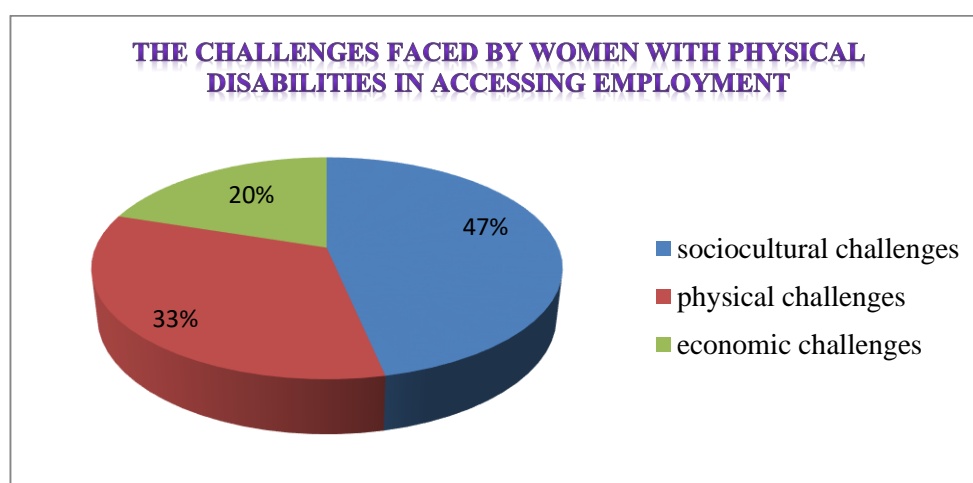
Fig 4.4 source; research data.

4.4 Sociocultural challenges

Objective one of the study focused on identifying the various forms of sociocultural challenges faced by WWD disabilities in accessing employment in Hatcliffe Extension, Zimbabwe. The majority of the respondents others through their care givers indicated that sociocultural challenges are the most challenging factors hindering them to access employment. They indicated that stigma and discrimination, stereotyping, gender norms and cultural perceptions are types of sociocultural challenges they are facing in accessing employment.
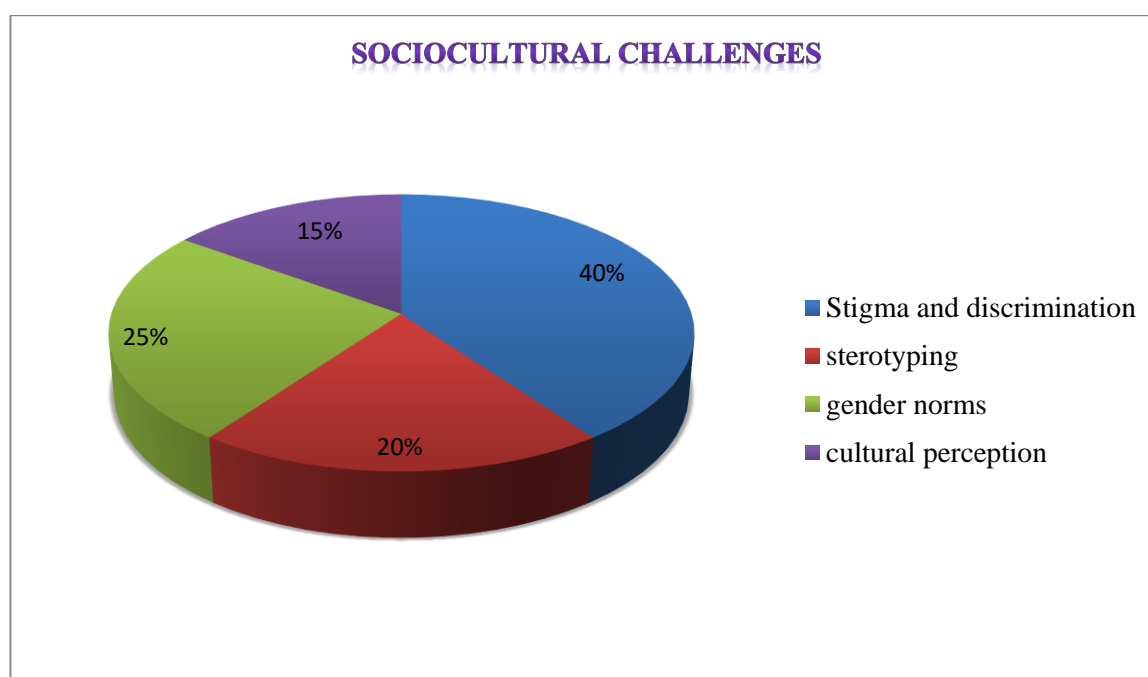
Fig 4.5, sociocultural challenges faced by WWD

4.4.1 Stigma and discrimination

From fig 4.5 the results indicates that, the majority of the respondents 24 (40%) are facing discrimination and stigma in accessing employment. The stigma attached to disability in Zimbabwe plays a critical role in perpetuating discrimination against women with physical disabilities. A 35-year-old respondent with partial vision impairment highlighted how societal attitudes label women like her as less capable.

> *Employers and some people think I am incapable of doing my work, even though I am able to perform my tasks, she said.* **(Respondent 10)**

The results revealed that, companies frequently rejects applications of PWD because of their disability rather than her qualifications, which perpetuates a systematic bias in the labor market. This is comparable to how Chitipa (2023), explain that this stigma has a substantial impact on employer views, which results in discrimination in hiring procedures, in addition to lowering the self-esteem of women with impairments. In order to create a more inclusive labor market, efforts must be made to alter these attitudes. Misconceptions about disabilities in society also contribute to this discrimination by promoting the idea that people with disabilities are incapable or undeserving of making contributions to society. With the exception of the fact that women with disabilities from Hatcliffe did not report any violence due to stigma and discrimination in accessing employment opportunities, the results were similar to those of the previous researchers in this study. Additionally, stigma can cause internalized feelings of inferiority among women with disabilities, which can undermine their confidence and make it more difficult for them to advocate for themselves.

4.4.2 Sociocultural gender norms

The results from fig 4.5 indicate that, 15 (25%) are facing sociocultural gender norms in accessing employment in Hatcliffe Extension. One of the respondents, shared her struggles with these norms, stating,

> *Due to my gender and disability, I decided not to pursue my dreams of becoming an engineer. I was told that since I am a housewife and do not have both hands, we do not need to continue paying you fees, but I should practice household chores with my disability." They also said that the boys were supposed to continue to tertiary education because they would be the ones responsible for the welfare of the family.'(***Respondent 8)***

Similar to what Chirebvu (2021) says, traditional gender roles in Zimbabwe often dictate that women's primary responsibilities lie within the domestic sphere, while men are expected to be the primary breadwinners, creating additional pressures for women with disabilities. Mawonde, et al (2023), also highlights the impact of entrenched gender norms on employment opportunities for women with disabilities. In Zimbabwe, traditional roles often dictate that women should prioritize domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations. Dube (2025) notes that these gender roles can be particularly restrictive for women with disabilities, who may be perceived as less capable of balancing work and family life. The intersection of these identities fosters compounded barriers that limit opportunities for self-advocacy and empowerment

4.4.3 Stereotyping

The results from fig 4.5 show that, 12 (20%) are facing stereotyping. One of the respondents, recalling instances from her life, stated,

> *"I am not readily accepted when I go for interviews because people believe that my disability prevents me from speaking clearly," she said.* **(Respondent 5)**

She illustrates how these stereotypes frequently portray individuals with disabilities as dependent, helpless, or incapable of leading productive lives. The societal perception that women like her are 'less than' often leads to significant barriers in professional settings where they may be overlooked in hiring processes or promotions. The discouragement that stems from these stereotypes creates a cycle of exclusion when women with disabilities do not see themselves represented or valued in the workplace, they are less likely to pursue ambitious career paths. Such stereotypes not only hinder individual advancement but also paint an incomplete picture of the talents. These results are similar from previous researchers however it differs in location being carried out.

4.4.4 Cultural perceptions

The results from fig 4.5 indicate that least women 9 (15%) are facing the challenge of cultural perceptions. Respondents like, an 18-year-old who has visual impairments, have shared their experiences regarding how societal attitudes towards disability can foster isolation.

> *My parents passed away when I was young, and I was raised by my aunt. I was told that, my mother had insulted my grandmother calling her a witch and thats why am the the only one born disabled in the family. I have lived with a disability for 36 years, and people have always looked down on me. Even though I tried my best, I was never recognized. I feel stuck and have lost confidence because of how society treats me.* **(Respondent 7).**

> *I don't know why people always view disabled people as a curse or a punishment for the past sins. These perceptions hinder us in many parts of the society. As for me I only completed my ECD level then that was it. People see me as a curse, but I have my own dreams. It is very hard to get employed if you are not get educated.She lamented.* **(Respondent 3)**

Families frequently hide their crippled members because of the respondent's viewpoint, which is representative of a larger cultural narrative that views disability as a curse or a retribution for

previous transgressions. Because of this, people like her deal with social views that minimize their contributions and existence in addition to personal hardships. Women with impairments are frequently perceived as burdens to their families or as objects of sympathy, which is comparable to what Mawonde, et al (2023) found in their study. People with disabilities are typically hidden away or discouraged from participating in public life because of cultural narratives that portray disability as a punishment for past transgressions or a curse passed down through families. As a result of this perception, families may prioritize resources for siblings who are able-bodied, which further entrenches the economic and educational disparities that women with disabilities face. Many women experience not only personal struggles related to their disabilities, but also a societal backdrop that devalues their existence and contributions, and they are frequently left out of discussions and activities that shape their communities, which contributes to a pervasive sense of isolation

4.5 Physical challenges faced by WWD.

Objective two of the study focused on identifying the various forms of physical challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Hatcliffe Extension, Zimbabwe. Under this theme, there were three categories including infrastructural inadequacies, lack of support systems and the lack of framework and implementation.

Larger proportion of respondent's highlighted lack of accessible infrastructure as many workplaces, public transport and educational institutions are not designed to accommodate some people with disabilities, followed by lack of policy framework and implementation gaps in Zimbabwe and lastly lack of support systems that would enable them to compete effectively in the job market. The bar graph below shows the physical challenges accordingly.
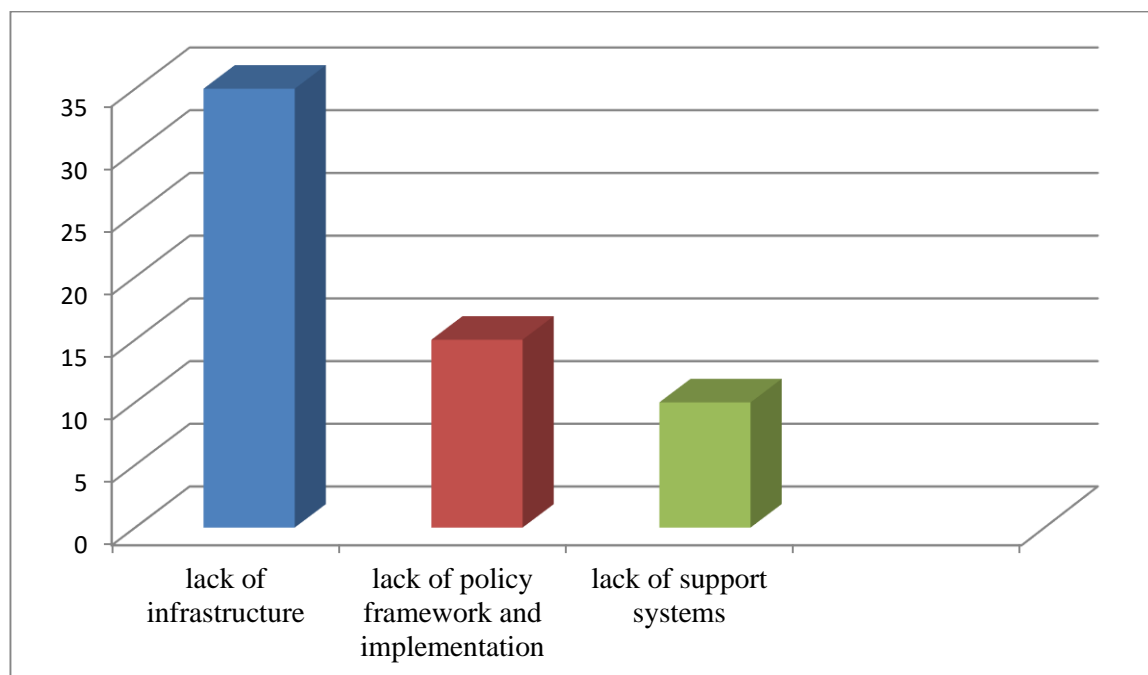
Fig 4.6, physical challenges faced by WWD.

4.5. 1 Lack of accessible infrastructure

The result shows that the majority of respondents 35 (58%) are facing infrastructure inadequacies in which is hindering them to access employment according to the bar graph above. One of the respondents who uses a wheelchair, expressed the frustrations she faces daily due to inadequate infrastructure, particularly concerning public transport systems. She shared,

> *Whenever I go to look for work, I face difficulties due to lack of transport. I remember this other day when I was going to town since there was a vacant for a cooker at a certain preschool near Harare CBD. I waited for almost 2 hours and there was no bus or car that was willing to give me a ride. Some conductors would say, we do not have time to waste caring you from that wheelchair . Eventually i gave up and went home.* (**Respondent 2**)

> *In Hatcliffe Extension there are many public transport that do not accommodate people with disability as a result we are unable to reach employment opportunities.* (**Respondent 2**)

This comment accurately captures her situation, as she frequently encounters serious flaws in the public transportation system in addition to the difficulties posed by buildings when traveling her neighborhood. Many taxis and public buses lack features like ramps, low floors, or wheelchair-accessible areas, making them inaccessible to those with impairments. This is

consistent with Braimah (2009), who emphasizes that transportation is the main obstacle that people with disabilities must overcome. Finding dependable transportation that meets their demands is therefore a difficult task for many women, which severely restricts their access to employment prospects. This is similar to research by Naami and Wills (2023) that shows that the lack of accessible transportation options further isolates women with disabilities, making it difficult for them to reach employment opportunities, especially in urban settings where jobs are often located far from residential areas. The additional stress of uncertain transportation options can deter people with disabilities from even trying to seek employment, further perpetuating their exclusion from the workforce.

Another respondent, who also use a wheelchair, expressed her hardship she faces due to inadequate infrastructure. She shared,

> *Whenever I go to look for work, I face challenges with transport and big stairs. Buildings are often not accessible and sometimes there are no ramps, making it hard for people with disabilities to move around, especially when there are stairs but no elevators.* (**Respondent 4)**

As evidenced by her testimony, many workplaces lack necessary amenities like ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms because they were not developed with people with physical disabilities in mind. The lack of ramps, elevators, and accessible facilities, according to Tome (n.d) presents major obstacles for women with mobility challenges, hence reducing their ability to obtain and maintain employment. Her ability to obtain employment prospects and fully engage in her community is directly hampered by these infrastructure deficiencies. The findings indicate that women with impairments frequently find themselves restricted to unaccommodating environments, which limits their independence and job-seeking opportunities. Enhancing public transportation to meet the requirements of people with disabilities is essential to promoting their independence, mobility, and eventually economic engagement. A more integrated public transportation system that is accessible can empower women physically, improving their quality of life and employment prospects. In order to foster a more inclusive atmosphere, immediate investments in accessible infrastructure are required, highlighting the significance of universal design principles that accommodate all people.

4.5.2 Lack of policy framework and policy implementation gaps

The results indicated that, respondents 15 (25%) from fig 4.6 are facing the lack of policy framework and implementation gaps. A 30-year-old responded with sensory impairment, often express frustration over the insufficient implementation of existing policies. She says that,

> *We have laws saying everyone has the right to work, but in reality, many people with disabilities, especially women, are unemployed because of their disability. We are often asked if we can do the job because of our disability, which is painful. As a person with a hearing impairment, I trained as a teacher but struggle to find work. The NDP* strive to ensure that a minimum of 15% of the workforce of all organizations across all sectors must comprise persons with disabilities. However *disabled people are barely seen in workplaces such as private sectors and the government just makes laws without ensuring they are being followed.* **(Respondent 1)**

She discloses, emphasizing the discrepancy between the intention of policy and its actual effects. This is comparable to a research by the Gender Industry Report (2016), which shows that systematic discrimination and a lack of enforcement of disability rights continue to make it difficult for women with disabilities to obtain employment despite current legislation. The lack of accessible workplaces, employers' ignorance of disability rights, and insufficient funding for initiatives that assist women with disabilities in finding employment are just a few examples of how these implementation gaps show up. Furthermore, many women are deterred from seeking assistance by the intimidating red tape and bureaucratic obstacles associated with the application processes for disability support programs. Employers may overlook qualified candidates due to preconceived notions about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities, further perpetuating exclusion from economic opportunities. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of advocacy and support from civil society organizations, which are frequently under-resourced and unable to effectively monitor compliance of disability-related policies. As a result, women with physical disabilities in Hatcliffe Extension often face hostile work environments where reasonable accommodations are neither recognized nor provided.

4.5.3 Lack of support systems

The results indicated that, the least of the respondents 10 (16, 67%) are facing Lack of support systems in accessing employment. One of the respondents with mobility impairment highlighted the crucial role of support services in enabling women with disabilities to access employment opportunities. She mentioned,

"Not having the opportunity to work hurts me, but I am fighting to show people that if things are possible, I can do anything. However, I lack support for things I wish to do, like working as a baker. There are few NGOs that can help us with our desires, because some people we live with don't care about giving us support or motivation. So, these NGOs help us advocate for our rights as disabled persons, so that we can also have employment opportunities.'' **(Respondent 6)**

This determination reflects her resilience, but it also underscores the significant obstacle presented by the lack of support services. Similarly, Naami and Wills (2023), argues that without these support systems, women with disabilities are left ill-equipped to navigate employment opportunities, further entrenching their marginalization. Building comprehensive support systems that offer training, mentorship, and advocacy can empower these women to overcome barriers and enhance their participation in the workforce, fostering a more inclusive economic environment. Through the detailed narratives of the respondents and research by mentioned researcher's it becomes clear that addressing the intertwined challenges of inaccessible infrastructure, systemic discrimination, and a lack of support services is crucial for enhancing employment opportunities for women with physical disabilities in Zimbabwe.

4.6 Economic challenges faced by WWD in accessing employment.

The results indicate that least 12 (30%) are facing economic challenges, such as poverty, lack of access to resources and inaccessible job opportunities. This can also be exacerbated by different discrimination in the labour market where women are more vulnerable as compared to men.
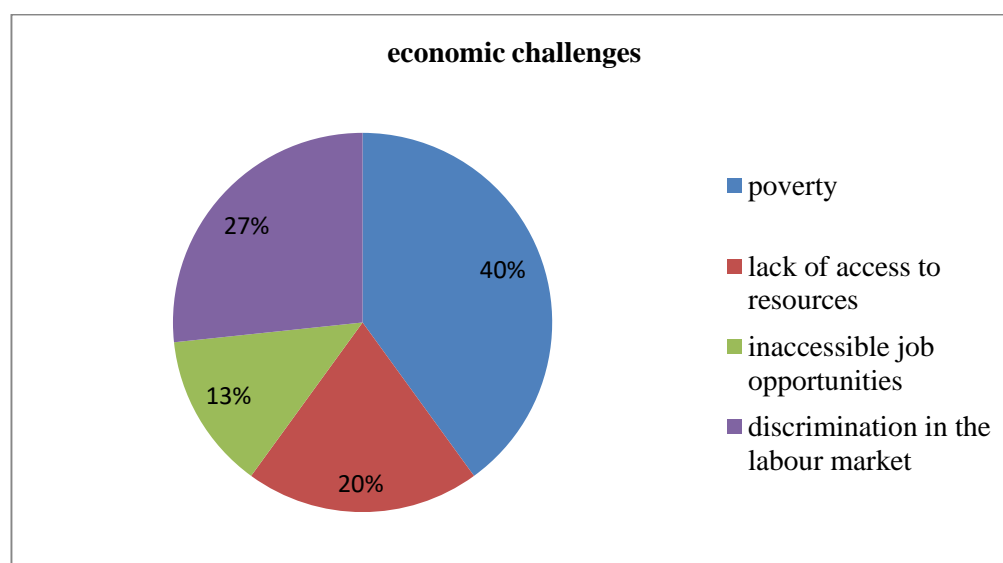

Fig 4.7, economic challenges faced by WWDin accessing employment.

4.3.3.1 Poverty

From fig 4.7 the results shows that the majority of the respondents 24 (40%) are facing poverty as an economic challenge in accessing employment. Many respondents, including a 35-year-old with mobility impairment, highlighted how their economic situations impact their educational opportunities. She explained that,

> *As a woman with a physical disability, I faced significant obstacles in accessing education due to poverty. Growing up in Hatcliffe, I lacked funds for school transportation and relied on family members or nonprofits, which was unreliable and undignified. The area had limited educational resources and no nearby school for individuals with disabilities, making it harder for me to get a good education, thereby limiting my chances of getting employment.* **(Respondent 9)**

A lack of accessible educational facilities and the difficulty to pay for transportation to school deter many young women with disabilities from going to college. The fact that women with disabilities experience poverty at a disproportionate rate because of structural constraints that restrict their access to education and work possibilities is comparable to what Mlambo & Mpanza (2024), emphasized. Due to financial constraints, families frequently give able-bodied siblings priority over those with disabilities. This is further corroborated by data from the World Health Organization (2021) showing that people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, which leads to a vicious cycle of disadvantage that is hard to break. Consequently, poverty not only reduces their educational opportunities but also sustains a cycle of economic disadvantage that is extremely hard to escape, because a lack of formal education limits access to improved career options. It is frustrating to realize that my skills, qualifications, and experience are often neglected in favor of able-bodied individuals, continuing the cycle of unemployment and poverty among persons with disabilities.

4.6.2 Discrimination in the labor market

Upon entering the job market, women with physical disabilities often encounter discrimination that hinders their chances of career advancement. One of the respondent states that,

> *As a person with a disability, I've faced consistent marginalization and exclusion from job opportunities. Employers often make assumptions about my abilities based on my appearance, ask invasive questions, and overlook my skills and qualifications in favor of*

*able-bodied candidates. This has hindered my employment prospects, eroded my confidence, and perpetuated the cycle of unemployment and poverty among people with disabilities. (***Respondent 5)**

Biased hiring procedures and workplace cultures that do not value diversity or inclusion are just two examples of how discrimination can appear. Rather of recognizing the potential and talent of people with disabilities, many companies may have misconceptions about their talents, supposing them to be less capable or more challenging to adapt. Hunter et al (2021) supports this by stating that many firms have prejudices against hiring persons with disabilities because they fear lower productivity or higher costs. Women with disabilities experience double discrimination because both their gender and disability are seen as limits. Chirebvu (2021) also highlights how discrimination against women with disabilities frequently occurs in the workplace, which has an impact on their career advancement and job stability. Women with disabilities are frequently restricted to low-paying or informal professions with no chance of growth due to this persistent stigma, which can lead to less prospects for career advancement inside workplaces. Their difficulties may be made worse by the unpleasant work settings brought about by discriminatory attitudes, which can also lead to mental health issues.

4.6. 3 Inaccessible job opportunities

The lack of access to formal employment opportunities presents a significant challenge for women with physical disabilities, exacerbating their economic challenges. Women with physical disabilities often find themselves relegated to the informal sector, where job security, benefits, and rights are minimal or nonexistent. One of the respondents asserts that,

> *The economic crisis in Zimbabwe has led to a shrinking job market, making it even more difficult for people with disabilities to secure employment. The hyperinflation, cash shortages, and company closures have resulted in a scarcity of job opportunities, and those that do exist often require physical abilities that I do not possess. Some of us end up being vendors on the streets but due to Council we were unable to sell anything. This has left me feeling frustrated, demotivated, and excluded from the workforce, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and dependency that many people with disabilities face in Zimbabwe,'' She lamented.* **(Respondent 6)**

It can be challenging for women with disabilities to achieve financial independence because informal professions frequently offer lower pay, longer workdays, and insufficient safeguards against exploitation or abuse. Mlambo & Mpanza (2024) asserts that informal employment frequently lacks the benefits and protections of formal employment, including job security, retirement plans, and health insurance. In addition, Tome (n.d) points out that women with disabilities are frequently subjected to hazardous working conditions and a lack of legal protections in informal employment. It can be challenging for women with disabilities to achieve financial independence because informal professions frequently offer lower pay, longer workdays, and insufficient safeguards against exploitation or abuse. Mlambo & Mpanza (2024) asserts that informal employment frequently lacks the benefits and protections of formal employment, including job security, retirement plans, and health insurance. In addition, Tome (n.d) points out that women with disabilities are frequently subjected to hazardous working conditions and a lack of legal protections in informal employment

4.6.4 Lack of resources

The least number of respondents 8 (13%) are lacking resources to access employment opportunities. One of the respondent states that,

> *'These days, technology makes it easier to apply for jobs, but some of us are poor and cannot afford a smartphone, let alone buy data to apply online. I don't even know how to use email to create an email address, so how will I apply for a job? "We are not asking for handouts, we are asking for a chance to prove ourselves, to show that we are capable and competent, but without access to resources, we are doomed to remain on the sidelines, watching others reap the rewards of employment and economic empowerment."* **(Respondent 2)**

Her remarks are in line with those of many Hatcliffe Extension women with physical impairments who are demanding a more equal and inclusive society that values and respects them and gives them the tools and resources they require to succeed. The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2020) reports that 70% of disabled women do not have a job. According to this figure, a lot of women have trouble finding work since they can't access resources that might help them find work.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This study investigates the challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Zimbabwe, using Hatcliffe Extension as a case study. Key findings were analyzed and discussed using pie charts, tables and bar graphs. A diverse group of women with physical disabilities, aged 18-40, with varying marital status, educational levels, employment status, and types of physical disabilities, participated in the study. The results were derived from the in depth interviews, focus group discussions done with the relevant respondents and questionnaire guide done with relative or caregivers. The findings revealed that sociocultural challenges, including stigma and discrimination, stereotypes, gender norms, and cultural perceptions, were the most prevalent, while physical challenges, such as lack of infrastructure, inadequate policy frameworks, and insufficient support systems, and economic challenges, comprising poverty, lack of access to resources, inaccessible job opportunities, and workplace discrimination, also posed significant barriers. Respondents' experiences and frustrations corroborated existing literature, but the study's unique focus on Hatcliffe Extension provided new insights, highlighting the need for a multifaceted approach to address these challenges and create an inclusive environment that enables women with physical disabilities to reach their full potential.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the whole project as well as the findings from the study which were presented in chapters one to four. Building on these findings, this chapter will provide summary of the research findings, conclusions, recommendations and areas of further study concerning the challenges faced by WWD in accessing employment in Zimbabwe, with a specific focus on the challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Hatcliffe Extension.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Summary of the whole project

Chapter One provided the introduction to the study, which highlighted the background of the study statement of the problem as well as the aim of the study. The objectives of the study, along with research questions, assumptions of the study and significance of the study were also articulated within this chapter. Chapter one also presented the delimitations and limitations of the study, definition of key terms along with the as well as the proposed structure of the study.

Chapter Two, presented the literature review, which highlighted narratives from secondary data sources instrumental in shaping the study. The chapter presented the direction taken by previous researchers in explaining the challenges faced by WWD in accessing employment. The thrust of the chapter was for the researcher to identify gaps in present literature as well as shape her research such that it adds value to prior research. Moreover, the chapter presented the theoretical framework to which the study is hinged. The study draws from the ffeminist disability theory which is an interdisciplinary framework that integrates feminist and disability studies and to examine how gender and disability intersect to shape the experiences of individuals, particularly women with disabilities. This theoretical lens is crucial for understanding the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities, as it highlights the ways in which societal structures, cultural norms, and institutional practices contribute to their marginalization.

Chapter Three, outlines the research methodology used in investigating the challenges faced by WWD in accessing in Hatcliffe Extension, employing mixed approach to capture the challenges. The study utilizes in depth interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires. The study

also used purposive sampling, and provides a targeted population and sample size as well as how data is going to be analysed and presented. Furthermore, the chapter provided insight into the ethical considerations made reference to in conducting the study and validity and reliability of the study.

Chapter Four, presented, analysed and discussed the findings of the research. Within this chapter data was presented in text, with the aid of tables, pie charts and graphs which were employed to create visual back up to the data. Findings were grouped into themes and subthemes, consistent with the research objectives as well as research questions.

Chapter Five, is the final chapter, which presents the close out to the study. The chapter presents the summary and conclusions drawn from the study. Additionally, the chapter also presents recommendations in terms of areas for action or programming as well as in areas for future studies.

5.2.2. Summary of the research findings

Objective one was sociocultural challenges faced by WWD in accessing employment. The study revealed that, the majority of the population are being affected by the sociocultural challenges. Stigma and discrimination were prevalent, with most of the respondents indicating that negative societal attitudes impact their self-esteem and employment prospects. Additionally, restrictive gender norms dictate that women should prioritize domestic roles, severely limiting their professional aspirations and reinforcing traditional expectations that marginalize women with disabilities. Approximately three quarters of the respondents reported facing stereotyping that undermines their capabilities. One woman noted that her intelligence and determination were often met with skepticism during community events and job applications, reflecting an ingrained societal perception that individuals with disabilities are often inferior. Cultural perceptions also contribute to social exclusion and isolation. Therefore, these sociocultural challenges create an environment that devalues women with physical disabilities, making it imperative to promote awareness, change societal attitudes, and advocate for gender equality to create a more inclusive job market. The findings in this section resonate with feminist disability theory, which emphasizes how gender and disability intersect to exacerbate marginalization. The societal perceptions and norms that dictate women's roles contribute to systemic discrimination, reinforcing the need for inclusive practices that combat stereotypes and empower women with disabilities.

The second objective of the study was about physical challenges faced by WWD in accessing in Zimbabwe. The study showed that, moderate women with physical disabilities in Hatcliffe Extension face significant physical challenges, primarily due to the lack of accessible infrastructure. A large proportion of respondents reported experiencing difficulties with public transport and workplaces that fail to accommodate their needs, impeding their ability to seek employment. Moreover, the investigation revealed a concerning lack of effective policy frameworks and implementation, resulting in discriminatory practices that exclude these women from the job market. Additionally, the absence of structured support systems and training programs further hinders their ability to compete effectively in employment settings.

The third objective of the study was about the economic challenges faced by WWD in accessing employment in Zimbabwe. The study indicated that, least WWD are facing economic challenges, largely stemming from systemic issues such as poverty, discrimination, and a lack of accessible job opportunities. The majority of respondents identified poverty as a critical barrier, limiting their access to education and resources necessary for securing stable employment. Discrimination in the labor market further exacerbates these economic struggles, as employers' biases often marginalize capable candidates with disabilities, leading to their exclusion from desirable job positions. Furthermore, many women are confined to the informal sector, where the absence of job security and benefits perpetuates cycles of poverty and dependency. A lack of resources, including vocational training and assistive technologies, adds to their challenges in gaining meaningful employment.

5.3 Conclusions

The first question was examining the sociocultural challenges faced by WWD encountered in Zimbabwe focusing in Hatcliffe Extension, which were mostly exhibited by discrimination and stigma, as well as sociocultural gender norms and stereotypes. This group is marginalized as a result of these difficulties, which hinders their social acceptance and ability to integrate into the community. Negative attitudes and presumptions that women with disabilities are dependent, unable, or less worthy of opportunities in school and employment are sometimes fostered by the stigma associated with impairments. These women's mental health and self-esteem are impacted by this stigma, which also restricts their social networks and exacerbates feelings of loneliness and isolation. Gender norms often stifle women with disabilities, hindering their opportunities for employment, education, and community engagement. These stereotypes also limit their agency and participation in decision-making, impacting community cohesion and national

development, and hindering their economic growth.SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) are hindered by exclusion of women which contradicts SDG 4 (Quality school). Therefore stigma, prejudice, stereotypes, and restrictive norms negatively impact women's lives and contribute to broader social problems, hindering Hatcliffe community and Zimbabwe's development.

The second question in the study examined the physical challenges WWD faced in accessing employment in Zimbabwe. Hatcliffe women with physical disabilities face physical challenges such as inadequate support systems, implementation gaps, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate legislative frameworks. Both the community and Zimbabwean society as a whole are significantly impacted by these problems. The absence of accessible roads, public transit, and amenities severely restricts their mobility and capacity to engage in social, educational, and economic activities. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which promotes safe and inclusive urban environments. The inadequate application of laws protecting people with disabilities violates SDG 10 and SDG 3. Social isolation and well-being are worsened by lack of community and healthcare assistance, contradicting SDG 3 and SDG 5. Gender Equality aims to empower women, promote workforce participation, and ensure equal access to resources. The challenges faced by women with disabilities in Hatcliffe hinder their quality of life and community advancement, emphasizing the need for coordinated action for equality, inclusivity, and accessibility in Zimbabwe's sustainable development agenda. Strong support networks, infrastructural development, and efficient policy frameworks are necessary.

The third question focused on analyzing the major economic obstacles that WWD faced when trying to find employment including poverty, discrimination at work, a lack of accessible job opportunities, inadequate accommodations, and limited access to resources. Poverty is often made worse for women with disabilities because they face obstacles that keep them from finding gainful employment, which can result in financial dependence and further entrenchment in a cycle of hardship. Discrimination at work perpetuates existing inequalities; employers may have prejudicial opinions about the abilities of women with disabilities, which restricts their access to job opportunities and career advancement. Many workplaces remain physically inaccessible, excluding women who require accommodations. This lack of accessible employment opportunities reveals systemic shortcomings in inclusive economic environments. Inadequate public infrastructure and basic resources hinder women's education and economic development in Zimbabwe. The lack of accessible job opportunities and accommodations threatens SDG 10's principles of reduced inequalities, exacerbates gender and disability disparities, and underutilizes

human potential, stifling local growth and innovation, and contradicting SDG 8's goal of sustainable economic growth. The ongoing cycle of poverty hinders SDG 1's efforts to eradicate poverty, emphasizing the need for targeted initiatives supporting women with disabilities, limiting their potential and limiting economic progress.

5.4 Recommendations

The study indicates that most women in Hatcliffe Extension are facing sociocultural challenges in accessing employment. It is recommended that the government should partner with media outlets, civil socities, educational institutions, and community leaders to actively foster for advocacy campaigns and awareness campaigns to disseminate positive stories about disability. More so, training programs should be developed for employers to educate them on the advantages of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as practical strategies for accommodating employees with disabilities. By promoting inclusive employment practices, organizations can create a more diverse and equitable workforce, benefiting from a wider range of perspectives and ideas.

 The findings showed that a typical percentage of respondents in Hatcliffe Extension face physical obstacles when trying to find work. It is recommended that, local governments and other pertinent authorities, should construct and upkeep infrastructure that is accessible to people with disabilities and should be given top priority. Workplaces with elevators, accessible restrooms, and unobstructed walkways are examples of this, as well as public transportation systems with ramps and wheelchair-accessible spaces.

The study also showed that, a significant number of WWD were complaining about the lack implementation gaps in the policies of disability and employment. It is recommended that, th government must to bolster oversight systems to guarantee adherence to workplace disability rights regulations. This entails educating businesses about their rights as disabled workers and offering training on how to accommodate workers with disabilities. It will assist in breaking down structural obstacles and giving women with disabilities equal chances in the workforce by implementing inclusive policies.

The findings showed that some respondents were having financial difficulties finding work in Zimbabwe. It is recommended that programs concentrate on giving women with disabilities access to assistive technologies and training that enable remote work opportunities, as technological advancements continue to transform the labor market. To ensure that women are competent in using technology for remote work and job applications, digital literacy programs

should be implemented to educate essential skills. Women with disabilities can participate in the workforce more completely and access a wider range of employment options by utilizing technology.

5.5 Areas for further research

Investigating the role of the government initiatives in promoting disability inclusive employment**.**

Resilience and coping strategies of women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Zimbabwe.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Zimbabwe. A case study of Hatcliffe Extension.

My name is Portia Marekera. I am a student at Bindura University studying towards a bachelor degree in Peace and Governance. Therefore it is mandatory for every student to conduct a research in the area of study. Hence I am appealing for your assistance and contribution to the relevant information regarding to my study topic which is the challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment. The main aim of this study is to identify the faced women with disabilities are facing in accessing employment.

Section A: Introduction Demographic data

1 Age Group

(Tick where applicable)

18- 22 [ ]   22- 26[ ]   26-30 [ ]   30- 34 [ ]   34-40 [ ]

2. Marital status

Single[ ]   Married [ ] Divorced [ ] widowed [ ]

3. Level of education

Primary [   ]   'O' level [   ]   'A' level [   ]   Tertiary [   ]

4. Occupation

Employed [ ] informally employed [ ] unemployed [ ]

5. Category of disability

Mobility impairments [ ] visual impairments [ ] cerebral palsy [ ] hearing impairments [ ] spinal cord injury [ ] traumatic injuries [ ]

Section B

(Tick where applicable)

1. Are you physically affected in accessing employment?   [High   ]   [Moderate   ] [Low   ]

2. Have you ever faced transport challenges while trying to access employment opportunities? [High   ] [Moderate   ]   [Low   ]

3. Are you facing lack of support systems in accessing employment?   [High   ]   [Moderate]   [low   ]

4. Have you ever felt discriminated by the policy framework?   [High   ]   [Moderate   ] [Low   ]

Section C. Sociocultural Challenges

Can you describe how affected are you by the Sociocultural challenges in accessing employment opportunities. [High]   [Moderate]   [Low]

Have you ever faced stigma and discrimination while accessing employment opportunities [High   ]   [Moderate]   [LOW   ]

Have you ever encountered cultural perceptions or stereotypes because of your disability in attempting to access employment opportunities? [High   ]   [Moderate   ]   [low   ]

Have you ever faced some sociocultural gender norms? [High   ]   [Moderate   ] [Low   ]

SECTION C. ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

How were you affected by the economic challenges in accessing employment opportunities?

[High   ]   [Moderate   ]   [Low   ]

How has poverty hindered you to access employment opportunities? [High   ] [Moderate   ] [LOW   ]

Have you ever feel like there's is limited job opportunities for people with disabilities. [HIGH] [Moderate   ]   [Low   ]

How has lack of resource affected you to access employment? [High   ]   [moderate   ]   [low   ]

Conclusion

What are your recommendations or thoughts to the problems that you are facing

....

....

....

....

....

....

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Zimbabwe. A case study of Hatcliffe Extension.

My name is Portia Marekera. I am a student at Bindura University studying towards a bachelor degree in Peace and Governance. Therefore it is mandatory for every student to conduct a research in the area of study. Hence I am appealing for your assistance and contribution to the relevant information regarding to my study topic which is the challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment. The main aim of this study is to discuss the challenges faced women with disabilities are facing in accessing employment.

Section A

May you kindly introduce yourselves;   name, age, occupation, marital status, category of disability.

Section B

May you kindly describe the kind of physical challenges you are facing

Describe the economic challenges that you are facing in accessing employment

What kind of sociocultural challenges you are facing in accessing employment opportunities.

Conclusion

What are your thoughts about these challenges.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment in Zimbabwe. A case study of Hatcliffe Extension.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Portia Marekera. I am a student at Bindura University studying towards a bachelor degree in Peace and Governance. Therefore it is mandatory for every student to conduct a research in the area of study. Hence I am appealing for your assistance and contribution to the relevant information regarding to my study topic which is the challenges faced by women with physical disabilities in accessing employment. The main aim of this study is to identify the faced women with disabilities are facing in accessing employment.

SECTION A

May you kindly introduce yourself including your name, age, level of education, marital status, and category of disability and sector of employment?

Section B

Have you ever faced physical challenges while accessing employment such as infrastructural inadequacies or any other?

If yes how do you feel about these challenges you are facing.

Section c

What kind of economic challenges faced you ever faced while accessing employment.

If yes does this challenge affect you anyhow?

Section D

Have you ever faced sociocultural challenges while accessing employment
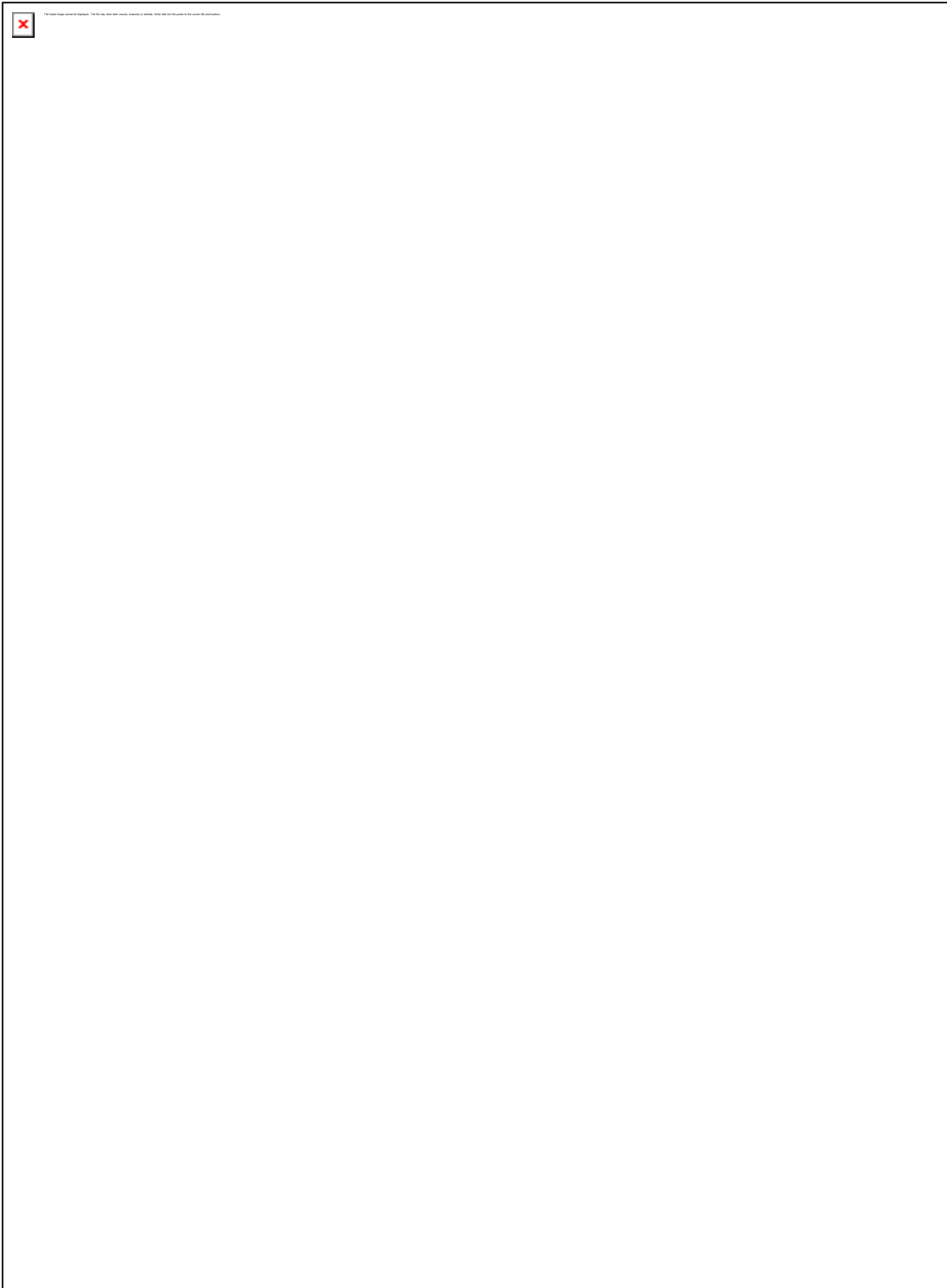
If yes explain how.

Section E

What are your thoughts about these challenges you are facing

What are your survival skills to mitigate these challenges

What are your recommendations to the Ministries.

APPENDIX D: UNIVERSITY LETTER

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APPENDIX E: LETTER FOR PERMISSION OF RESEARCH

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