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A Descriptive Exploration of Selected Employment Barriers and Supports for Individuals With Visual Impairments in Bangladesh

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A DESCRIPTIVE EXPLORATION OF SELECTED EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN BANGLADESH

A Dissertation

by

MD MOZADDED HOSSEN

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ABSTRACT

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Employment is crucial for individuals with disabilities, including those with visual impairments, as it facilitates financial independence, promotes social inclusion, enhances the quality of life, and enables the utilization of valuable job-related skills. However, some barriers obstruct opportunities for employment for individuals with visual impairments, which affect different areas of their lives. This dissertation investigated the employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh, with an aim to understanding the factors that impacted employment outcomes for individuals with visual impairment, including access to education and training, availability of employment supports and services, and attitudes towards individuals with visual impairment in the workplace.

In addition, the study examines the types of employment supports (e.g., vocational training, job placement assistance, and skill development programs) available to individuals with visual impairments and their effectiveness in facilitating employment. Using a survey design to collect data from a sample of 144 individuals with visual impairments who were either employed or seeking employment, the research included questions on demographics, education and

training, employment history, employment support, and stigma experienced by individuals with visual impairments in the workplace. Data analysis was descriptive.

Keywords: Visual impairments, Employment, Barriers, Bangladesh, Support.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents whose consistent support and affection always moved me forward, my deceased paternal and maternal grandparents & great grandparents, uncles, and aunts whose family spirit always internally motivated me and catalyzed my scholarly expedition. I want to express my gratitude to my other family members and relatives, especially those who demonstrated unwavering trust, inspiration, patience, and understanding throughout my journey.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to individuals who espouse the value of knowledge acquisition and the potential of education to effect profound personal and societal changes. May this document stand as evidence of a collective dedication to the pursuit of knowledge, personal development, and the advancement of our society.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Employment for individuals with visual impairments is an important and understudied issue in Bangladesh. According to the World Health Organization [WHO] (2019), approximately 285 million people worldwide have a visual impairment, and most live in low-income nations like Bangladesh. The primary factors contributing to vision loss and blindness worldwide are age-related macular degeneration, refractive errors, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma (WHO, 2019). In terms of accessibility, cost, and level of education, there are significant individual differences in the causes of vision impairment within and between countries. For example, untreated cataracts cause a higher rate of vision impairment in low- and middle-income countries. Age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma are more prevalent in nations with high incomes. Congenital cataracts, a primary cause of vision impairment in children in low-income nations, are more likely to occur in middle-income countries than in low-income ones due to retinopathy of prematurity; general uncorrected refractive error continues to be the principal factor affecting children's and adults' eyesight in all nations.

Finding and maintaining employment can be challenging for individuals with visual impairments due to various barriers, including negative attitudes toward disability, a lack of accessible work environments, and limited access to education and training (Babu & Ramesh, 2017; Jeon et al., 2022). Despite these challenges, employment is essential for individuals with visual impairments, offering the potential for financial independence, a sense of purpose, and

social inclusion (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2016). Therefore, it is essential to study the employment experiences of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh to identify their barriers and provide support to help them achieve employment outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Productive work, generally defined as gainful employment, is not just a key measure of adult success in practically every culture but is also essential to ensure one's subsistence (Mitra et al., 2013; Zhenjing et al., 2022). However, compared to people with normal visual functioning, those with visual impairments experience unemployment at considerably higher rates over the long term. For instance, in 2016, 29.5% of non-institutionalized individuals with visual impairments between the ages of 21 and 64 worked full-time throughout the year in the United States (Erickson et al., 2017). In 2009, the employment rate of individuals with a visual impairment aged 21 to 64 was 38.7%, while the employment rate of adults without a visual impairment was 76.8% (Erickson et al., 2017). More than 70% of working-age people reporting considerable vision loss do not have full-time jobs (Marques et al., 2022).

In Bangladesh, when compared to people without disabilities, studies have indicated that people with disabilities are at a higher disadvantage and have more trouble finding governmental and non-governmental occupations (Tareque et al., 2014). The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) surveyed in 2010 and found that only 53.6% of men with disabilities and 78.8% of men without disabilities had jobs. It was challenging for people with disabilities to obtain even 10% of public sector jobs in the third and fourth grades and 1% of first- or second-grade jobs (BBS, 2014). According to these studies, the prevalence of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh's disability population ranges from 23% to 30% (Haider & Zaman, 2012).

Visual impairment greatly impacts adult populations' quality of life (WHO, 2022). Adults with visual impairments often have higher rates of anxiety and depression, along with decreased rates of labor force participation and productivity. Furthermore, social isolation, trouble walking, a chance of falls and fractures, and unemployment are among the challenges faced by an older adult with visual impairments (WHO, 2022). Due to the large and rising number of cases of vision loss and its impact on comorbid conditions such as depression, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and so forth, vision impairment places a significant financial burden on the entire world, with an estimated yearly global productivity loss of nearly 411 billion US dollars in purchasing power parity (Diallo et al., 2022; Marques et al., 2022).

Employment allows individuals with visual impairments to overcome social isolation and achieve life fulfillment (Vornholt et al., 2013). Despite being aware of the importance of getting involved in the job market, many individuals with visual impairments struggle to find work due to social stigma and other issues. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022), the unemployment rate among people with disabilities was 10.1% in 2021, which was 12.6% in 2020. This unemployment rate highlights the fact that individuals with visual impairments are still twice as likely to be unemployed in the labor market as those without an impairment.

In 2013, the President and Bangladeshi parliament adopted the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act, Bangladesh's new disability law, which the United Nations Charter supported. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [UNCRPD], anyone unable to effectively engage in society is considered disabled (The United Nations, 2022). The Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act and other laws outline the fundamental human rights that apply to people with disabilities on an equal

footing with other citizens (de Beco, 2021). Disability-related legislation in Bangladesh enables individuals with visual impairments to live their everyday lives free from obstacles.

According to the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act, there are three different kinds of visual impairments: 1) Fully Visual: no visual function in both eyes; 2) Partially Visual: one eye is wholly sightless or blind; and 3) Indistinct Visual: it is considered insufficient blindness (UNCRPD, 2013). There is another type of visual impairment in addition to the three other types: hearing-visual disability, which refers to the inability to hear fully or partially, and the ability to see fully or partially. There are four divisions of hearing-visual disability types: 1) medium-to-severe hearing and visual disability; 2) medium-to-severe hearing, visual, and other disabilities; 3) limitation of vision and hearing level; and 4) decreasing vulnerability of vision and hearing capacity (UNCRPD, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

The Social Model of Disability (also known as the Social Model) is a theoretical framework emphasizing how social and environmental variables create barriers and limits for individuals with disabilities (Shakespeare, 2020). It contends that disability is caused by societal structures, attitudes, and policies that exclude and marginalize people with disabilities rather than just their disability or medical condition and emphasizes the requirement for societal modifications and removing obstacles to promote inclusion and equal opportunity for people with disabilities (Shakespeare, 2019). The Social Model of disability provides a valuable lens for understanding studying barriers, employment supports, and employment outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh because it accounts for how social, cultural,

economic, and political conditions impact how individuals with visual impairments view the world.

To expand further, according to the Model, societal forces rather than individuals with visual impairments are responsible for societally established barriers to employment. Importantly, the social model of disability suggests that societal and individual factors influence employment prospects for individuals with visual impairments. Personal factors include training and self-assurance, while societal factors include inclusive policies, infrastructure, and employer attitudes (Chaudhuri & Bhattacharjee, 2021; Kuiper et al., 2019). According to Söderström (2021) and Thomas (2018), additional obstacles may include inaccessible physical locations, a lack of inclusive workplace rules, negative attitudes and prejudices, a lack of educational opportunities, and insufficient assistive technologies. These elements may limit employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments and labor market participation. The social model of disability also strongly emphasizes implementing suitable support and accommodations to alleviate the challenges individuals with visual impairments encounter in the workplace through the use of assistive technology and gadgets, making reasonable accommodations at work, participating in vocational training programs, and providing inclusive education (Sharma, 2020; Shrestha et al., 2022). This model provides a framework for examining employment barriers, support, and outcomes, guiding inclusive policies and interventions.

Purpose of the Research

According to the Constitution of Bangladesh, all citizens have the right to enjoy their dignity and fundamental human rights and have social equality (Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh [CPRB], 1972). These include the right to recognition of equal

citizenship, the right to proper health service, the right to use sign or own language, and communication, the right to accessibility in the community, the right to use accessible transportation, the right to education and training, and the right to discrimination-free employment opportunities are all fundamental rights (CPRB, 1972). Unfortunately, the CPRB created no rights specifically for individuals with disabilities.

More recently, the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act of 2013 mandated that the People's Republic of Bangladesh's Constitution should incorporate the requirement that individuals with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. Even with this, securing a job in Bangladesh is extremely difficult for individuals with visual impairments. Disability, poverty, and a lack of education strongly correlate with successful employment outcomes (Abu Alghaib, 2014; Banks et al., 2018; Lusting, 2013). Individuals with disabilities were trapped in poverty due to disability-related challenges. Individuals with disabilities do not fare well in the Bangladeshi educational system. In Bangladesh, poverty and illiteracy make it difficult to obtain desired jobs (International La Croix, 2019). Regarding attitudes and physical structures, most Bangladeshi workplaces are not accessible to individuals with disabilities (Jahan & Holloway, 2021; Morwane et al., 2021), and these concerns are worthy of study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Employment is essential, as it has significant implications for the overall quality of life and well-being of individuals with visual impairments (Jones et al., 2018). In Bangladesh, where approximately 1.8% of the total population has any form of visual impairment, the challenges faced by this population in terms of employment are particularly unavoidable (Shakoor et al., 2022). The employment of individuals with visual impairments has been a topic of interest in Bangladesh for many years. Despite progress in recent years, individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh continue to face significant barriers to employment. This chapter examined the extant literature on the engagement of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh, pinpointed crucial obstacles to employment for this demographic, explored the employment supports implemented to assist individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh, evaluated their efficacy, and pinpointed gaps in the literature.

Background

An investigative report on the employment situation of people with disabilities in Bangladesh suggested that the average monthly income is BDT-500 in Bangladeshi currency, equivalent to $4.84 in US dollars (Center for Services and Information on Disability [CSID], 2022). Most people with disabilities reported having no savings at the end of the month. For people with visual impairments, the retention rate in the workforce is virtually 100%, and these

particular people without disabilities put much effort into their jobs (CSID, 2022). Creating an inclusive working environment for individuals with visual impairments can establish a productive workforce. A comprehensive skill-development strategy for individuals with disabilities in Bangladeshi society is required, as is a national inclusion policy (Bangladesh Association for the Blind [BAB], 2019).

Employment Challenges

Securing a job in Bangladesh is difficult regardless of educational background, but it can be more difficult for individuals with visual impairments (Banks et al., 2018). Some individuals with disabilities have turned to paying bribes to land employment. Some individuals with disabilities lack the self-confidence to apply for jobs because they have internalized beliefs about their capacity due to their impairments (McLaughlin, 2020). Securing employment for women in Bangladesh is more difficult as oftentimes they struggle to get employment due to cultural norms. For example, in Bangladesh and numerous African countries, female teenagers with impairments experience pervasive economic and social marginalization due to gender differences (Mitra et al., 2013; Tisdell, 2019).

For instance, recent research by Prewitt-Diaz (2023) reveals that women with disabilities face severe impediments to participation in the workforce, which is typical in Cameroon, Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya. Women with disabilities face various material issues and challenges in their daily lives due to their distinctive features such as deafness, mutism, blindness, intellectual or psychosocial disorders, physical disabilities, and complex disabilities (Prewitt-Diaz, 2023). They face obstacles to accessing quality housing, healthcare, education, professional training, and employment in the public and private domains. Additionally, they experience discrimination when trying to get jobs, get exercise, get credit, and use other options

for making money. Moreover, they rarely receive consideration in political or economic decision-making processes.

Even though many people with disabilities possess some skills or knowledge, their career options are nonetheless limited. For people with disabilities, financing is more difficult to obtain, which makes starting a business more challenging. Access to training, microcredit, specialized programs for women with disabilities, rehabilitation facilities, and quotas are just a few ways to overcome barriers to work (Lampard & Bunsell, 2019; McLaughlin, 2020; Tisdell, 2019).

Bangladesh has conducted several studies on employment for individuals with visual impairments. For example, Rahman (2017) surveyed 172 people with visual impairments in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, to explore their employment experiences and challenges. Only 30% of the participants in the study found employment, and those who did were more likely to have received higher education and vocational training. Barriers to employment identified by the participants included a lack of job opportunities, negative attitudes toward people with disabilities, and limited access to assistive technologies. Economic development, structural problems, demographics, education and training, environmental considerations, public awareness, labor unions, and industrialization are just a few examples of the many aspects that make up employment barriers for individuals with visual impairments (Rahman et al., 2022; Sevak et al., 2015).

Furthermore, individual characteristics significantly impact the probability of unemployment, as well as macroeconomic and firm-related factors. These variables include age, gender, race and ethnicity, family history, occupation, degree of education, and length of employment. Additionally, there is still a sizable employment disparity between those with

disabilities and those without disabilities. However, it is lower for highly skilled professionals than for less skilled workers, demonstrating the existence of ableist discrimination (Rahman et al., 2022). This latest study highlights the ongoing difficulties the Bangladeshi labor force continues to encounter, underscoring the necessity of focused measures to advance inclusive employment practices.

According to a study by Hasan et al. (2015), many people with visual impairments in Bangladesh work in the informal sector, such as street vendors, waste pickers, and domestic workers. This is significantly lower than the employment rate for the general population, which is approximately 50% (BBS, 2014). Another study by Khan (2017) found that individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh face significant barriers to employment, including lack of education and training, lack of access to assistive technology, and negative attitudes and beliefs of employers and the public toward hiring individuals with visual impairments.

Other studies have focused on specific employment supports for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. For example, Hossain et al. (2019) conducted a pilot program to provide vocational training and job placement services to 20 individuals with visual impairments in Chittagong. The program successfully placed 15 participants in jobs, and the authors concluded that vocational training and job placement services could effectively increase employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh.

The research by Gupta et al. (2021) explored a crucial facet of Canadian adults with vision impairments participating in the workforce. This study clarifies the difficulties and discrepancies that members of this demographic group encounter when looking for jobs. The study's conclusions significantly impact the current conversation about accessibility, inclusion,

and disability rights in the workplace. Ebuenyi et al. (2018) conducted a scoping review which revealed that poor health, social stigma, discrimination, unfavorable employer attitudes, and a lack of social support from the government are the main obstacles for individuals with visual impairments seeking employment in Africa.

Barriers to Employment

Individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh encounter considerable impediments to employment (Hossen et al., 2023). These employment barriers have limited the options for meaningful work and prevented individuals with visual impairments from achieving economic independence (Jones et al., 2018). The lack of inclusive laws and regulations (Chen, 2018) is one of the significant barriers to ensuring equal job opportunities for individuals with visual impairments. Similar research by Cho and Kim (2022) also indicated that the need for more reasonable accommodations, such as assistive technologies and workplace modifications, could help individuals with visual impairments perform their job obligations successfully, exacerbating this shortcoming.

Rahman et al. (2022) found that similar impediments hinder individuals with visual impairments from securing employment, and advancing in their careers, and preventing them from doing so. Furthermore, discrimination and exclusion from the workforce are frequently the results of society's pervasive unfavorable attitudes and preconceptions about disability (Kabir, 2021). Similar barriers to employment exist in the UK for individuals with visual impairments, including inadequate reasonable accommodations and limited access to assistive technology (Johnson & Thompson, 2023). These obstacles show how comprehensive policies and greater awareness are required to promote inclusive employment practices globally.

Transportation. Another significant obstacle is the absence of accessible infrastructure and transportation facilities, which makes it challenging for individuals with visual impairments to find their way to jobs. A recent study by Rahman and Bari (2022) that focused on the importance of inclusive urban planning and accessible public transportation alternatives brought this issue to light. The restricted availability of accommodations and assistive technologies in businesses further hampers the career possibilities for those who are blind. According to Ahmed et al. (2022), who surveyed workplace accessibility, a lack of adaptive tools and software significantly affects the productivity and integration of visually impaired personnel. Another study on employment barriers for individuals with visual impairments or blind people conducted by the World Services for the Blind [WSB] (2017) indicated that transportation to work is a great barrier when individuals with visual impairments are trying to find employment.

Societal Attitudes and Stigma. Furthermore, society's perceptions and attitudes towards individuals with visual impairment frequently cause prejudice throughout the recruiting process and at work. According to a study by Rahman and Khan (2022), employers' beliefs and biases regarding the abilities of people who are blind or visually impaired serve as substantial hurdles to their employment. These results underline the urgent need for policy measures, more knowledge, and inclusive practices to alleviate the obstacles faced by those with vision impairments in the Bangladeshi labor market.

Many countries worldwide, including Bangladesh, have similar barriers to employment for those who are blind or visually impaired. For instance, there are still considerable difficulties in the United States, notwithstanding the legal rights offered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). According to a study by Smith and Jones (2022), employers' preconceptions about the ability of individuals with visual impairments frequently make it difficult for them to access

work possibilities. Lack of inclusive workplace regulations and inaccessible infrastructure are significant barriers to employment in India, a nation with a large population of visually impaired people (Patel et al., 2023).

Job Opportunities. Among several critical barriers to employment for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh is a lack of job opportunities, as many employers are hesitant to hire people with disabilities (Mahasneh et al., 2023). Negative attitudes toward people with disabilities, both among employers and the public, can also be a significant barrier (Zheng et al., 2016). In addition, individuals with visual impairments may face challenges regarding education and training, as they may not have access to the same resources as those without disabilities (Rahman, 2017). Limited access to screen readers and braille displays can also hinder employment for individuals with visual impairments (Hossain et al., 2019).

Limited Access to Healthcare. Another study by Sabur et al. (2019) found that individuals with visual impairments face significant challenges when accessing healthcare in Bangladesh. The study's participants reported that they often had to rely on family members or friends for transportation to healthcare facilities, which can be difficult for people who are blind or have low vision. The study also found that many healthcare facilities in Bangladesh lack accessibility features, such as Braille signs and tactile markings, making it difficult for individuals with visual impairments to navigate these spaces independently.

Level of Education. Recent studies strongly correlate education and employment, typically resulting in lower unemployment rates for those with higher levels of education (Smith et al., 2021; Yin et al., 2014). Mahfuz et al. (2021) revealed that individuals with visual impairments also encounter several attitudinal hurdles in their educational institutions. For

underrepresented populations like those with disabilities, the effect of education on employment success is significant. Employers' lack of mandates or obligations to hire individuals with visual impairments exacerbates the difficulties people with disabilities face in seeking employment in Bangladesh, where the private sector is the primary source of work (Rahman et al., 2022). This significantly impacts the nation's overall employment rates for individuals with disabilities.

Employment Supports

The endeavor to enable individuals with visual impairments to find employment in Bangladesh has recently gotten significantly more attention. By putting into effect laws like the Bangladesh National Disabled Development Foundation Act and the National Policy on Disability, the Bangladeshi government has made significant efforts to support the employment of persons with disabilities. Additionally, organizations like the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD), the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), and the Bangladesh National Society for the Blind (BNSB) are actively involved in offering vocational training, job placement assistance, and skill development programs specifically tailored for individuals with visual impairments. BNSB's activities include training courses in computer proficiency, call center management, and braille transcription, providing people with the qualifications they need to enter the workforce. The Disability Rights and Protection Act of 2013, which the government has also implemented, mandates a quota for people with disabilities in public sector occupations.

According to a recent report by the World Blind Union (WBU), these initiatives have raised the employment rates of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh, with a considerable percentage gaining jobs in both the public and private sectors (WBU, 2022). Success stories of individuals with visual impairments who have found employment in the public

and private sectors prove that these efforts have had a positive effect, resulting in a more inclusive and diversified workforce in Bangladesh (The Daily Star, 2022). Despite these developments, problems exist, such as low awareness, mental obstacles, and inaccessible workplaces. The attainment of fair employment possibilities for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh is still far off, but continuous initiatives and collaborations amongst stakeholders give a reason for optimism.

Effectiveness of Employment Supports

The effectiveness of employment support for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh has been mixed (Mahfuz et al., 2021). The vocational training programs have had some success in increasing employment rates for individuals with visual impairments (Lee, 2020). However, a study by Rahman et al. (2020) found that the job placement services provided by the BNSB were less effective. Only 37% of program participants could find employment after completing the program, which suggests that these services' performance could have been better. This indicates a discrepancy between the job placement services' stated objectives and the actual outcomes obtained. The study highlights the need for a thorough analysis of the variables causing this decreased success rate and urges potential adjustments to the services' design and delivery to better meet the needs and goals of the participants. Such research is an invaluable source of knowledge for organizations looking to improve their job placement initiatives and better assist people in their employment-seeking activities. This may be due to the limited job opportunities available for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh.

Cimera et al. (2015) found that vocational training, job placement, and individualized VR services effectively increased employment opportunities for this population, resulting in the placement of 15 of the 20 program participants in jobs. However, the study by Rahman (2017)

showed worrying statistics: only 30% of participants with visual impairments could find employment. This sobering truth highlights the urgent need for more and better employment opportunities for this population. The study emphasizes the difficulties individuals with visual impairments encounter while pursuing meaningful employment, including issues with accessibility, unfair treatment, and a lack of inclusive legislation. This study serves as a solid call to action, urging coordinated efforts from numerous stakeholders, such as employers, policymakers, and advocates, to develop an environment that is more welcoming and supportive and allows individuals with visual impairments to access the workforce and succeed there.

Employment Outcomes

The fact that employment outcomes differ significantly across the nation suggests that differences in urban and rural economic, policy, or other environmental characteristics play a vital role in determining employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments. Recent studies by Jeon et al. (2022) have shown that employer attitudes, willingness to provide reasonable accommodations at work, and other unobservable factors may impact how well individuals with visual impairments fare in the job market. Theoretically speaking, the social model of disability postulated that an individual's medical condition or impairment, assistive devices, and features of their physical, social, policy, and economic, environments are significant determinants of participation in social activities like employment (Goering, 2015; Sevak et al., 2016; Terry & Hayfield, 2021).

Research by Mahasneh et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of the social model of disability in determining how people with disabilities view the employment process. Lengnick-Hall et al. (2022) also examined the impact of employer biases and perceived accommodation costs on hiring decisions. These studies offer insight into the intricate interaction of several

factors that may affect a person's ability to find a job if they have a visual impairment. Recent findings shed light on the difficulties faced by individuals with visual impairments in the workforce. This report emphasizes the need for awareness-raising efforts, policy changes, and inclusive employment practices to end stigma and create equal opportunities for all. Legislators, organizations, and businesses must address these underlying problems to allow fair job opportunities for individuals with visual impairments.

Individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh experience adverse work outcomes due to stigma (Ahmed et al., 2019; Koly et al., 2023; Popova & Kuhar, 2022). Despite campaigns to support diversity and equal opportunity, negative social views persist, resulting in limited job opportunities and workplace discrimination. Employers may develop misgivings about the ability and productivity of people who are blind or visually impaired, which makes them hesitant to hire individuals with visual impairments. The pervasive stigma frequently brings about this bias (Shirley et al., 2023). In addition, societal stigmas associated with vision impairment contribute to the general marginalization of this demographic in society, including the labor market. This stigma prevents individuals with visual impairments from being economically independent and participating fully in the community, feeding the cycle of dependency and poverty (McDonnall et al., 2022).

The unemployment rate among individuals with visual impairments continues to be significantly higher than the national average, according to recent reports from the Bangladesh National Blind Welfare Organization (BNBWO, 2022) and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2021), reflecting the long-lasting effects of stigma on their employability. To solve this issue, coordinated efforts are required to increase awareness, provide inclusive education and vocational training, and enforce anti-discrimination regulations to establish a more inclusive and

supportive work environment for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh (BBS, 2021; BNBWO, 2022). In addition, unfavorable perceptions and myths about visual impairment feed the exclusionary loop, fostering prejudice and poor career prospects. Recent studies (Ahmed et al., 2022; Rahman & Uddin, 2021) emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive interventions that confront societal perceptions, raise awareness, and offer reasonable accommodations to address this ongoing problem and enhance employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh.

Transportation significantly impacts employment outcomes for Bangladeshi individuals with visual impairments (The Daily Star, 2017). They must be able to commute independently, access jobs, and participate in the workforce, requiring practical and accessible transportation infrastructure (The Daily Star, 2022). However, the present transportation system in Bangladesh sometimes cannot meet the unique requirements of individuals with visual impairments, which restricts their career options. Individuals with visual impairments have difficulty finding their way to work since there are not enough accessible public transit options, such as buses and trains, combined with shoddy infrastructure (Inclusion Times, 2023). This accessibility issue restricts their mobility, limits their employment opportunities, and exacerbates already-existing employment disparities. To address this issue, the government, decision-makers, and relevant parties must prioritize inclusive mobility programs and invest in ADA-compliant infrastructure.

Gaps in the Literature

The literature on employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh is still relatively small, revealing a considerable need for study and understanding. While Bangladesh has conducted various studies to investigate disability concerns, the specific focus on vision impairment and its consequences for work remains

unexplored. Rahman et al. (2022) conducted a recent study that shed light on the difficulties individuals with visual impairments encounter in gaining access to school and career possibilities in Bangladesh. The study noted barriers such as restricted access to quality education, poor assistive technologies, societal stigma, and discrimination. However, additional research is required to ascertain the extent of these obstacles, devise suitable support strategies, and assess the employment outcomes for this marginalized group. It is critical to fill this vacuum in the research to influence policies and actions that promote inclusion, equal opportunities, and improved career prospects for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the descriptive methodology used in the study. To address the research question and achieve the study's primary aim, a cross-sectional survey was employed to explore barriers and supports to employment among the participants. The following subsections describe the survey study protocol and the overall process applied in this research.

Research Design

A quantitative cross-sectional survey using an amalgamation of several different standardized questionnaires with established reliability and validity was used to investigate the employment barriers, supports, and perceived outcomes for individuals with visual impairment in Bangladesh. Cross-sectional surveys can be used quantitatively to explore a population's attitudes, trends, experiences, and opinions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Surveys are also beneficial because they are cost-effective and offer a rapid turnaround in data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, a survey research design allows for data collection from a large sample in a relatively short period.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What employment barriers are faced by individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh?

2. What support services are available for individuals with visual impairments seeking employment in Bangladesh?
3. How do individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh perceive their functional abilities as they related to employment?
4. What stigma are individuals with visual impairments experiencing in Bangladesh?
5. What employment-related transportation obstacles exist for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh?

Sampling Design

Convenience sampling based on location was used because it is a practical method for investigating employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. This sampling strategy entails identifying people who are readily available and accessible within a specified geographical area, such as eye hospitals, eye clinics, eye campaigns, etc. Convenience sampling also selects respondents based on their convenience and availability (Fowler, 2014), making participant recruitment more accessible and convenient. However, it's crucial to acknowledge its limitations, such as potential selection bias and the inability to generalize findings to the entire population. Nonetheless, it can offer valuable insights into a specific location's background and assist in a better understanding of the employment issues faced by individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh.

A total of 144 visually impaired individuals, either currently employed or seeking employment in Bangladesh, comprise the sample for this study. A convenience sample approach was used, stratifying the sample by age, gender, and educational attainment. Recruitment occurred through collaboration with local organizations that serve individuals with visual

impairments; however, the potential for sampling bias exists as the sample may not accurately represent the entire population of visually impaired individuals in Bangladesh.

A convenience sample of 144 individuals with a visual impairment aged between 18 and 60 years participated in the study who are employed or seeking employment in Bangladesh. The age has been selected based on workforce entry and retirement in the People's Republic of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the legal working age ranges from 18 to 60. Ensuring the legal eligibility of persons within this range is crucial given the study's focus on job barriers and outcomes. In Bangladesh, those between the ages of 18 and 60 make up most of the working population. This age group includes those who are actively looking for work, are in the process of entering or leaving the workforce or are in the workforce. This group ensures that the research captures the experiences of those most impacted by work-related issues. Furthermore, restricting the age range from 18 to 60 makes the sample more homogeneous, which makes cross-cohort comparisons easier. Both male and female individuals with visual impairments participated in the survey. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

a) People with visual impairments, both male and female.
b) Age range: 18–60.
c) People with visual impairments who are employed or seeking employment.

The Exclusion criteria were as follows:

a) People without visual impairment.
b) Age range: under 18 years old and older than 60.
c) People with visual impairments who are not seeking employment.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred at eye hospitals located in urban areas of Bangladesh, as well as from eyecare campaigns arranged by local non-profit organizations with assistance from eye hospitals in the northern rural regions of Bangladesh. Data was collected both in-person and over the telephone through individual and, in some cases, group administration of the instruments (Fink, 2016; Fowler, 2014; Krueger & Casey, 2014). The survey instruments included closed-ended and open-ended questions, which took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The members of the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA) Bangladesh Chapter collected the data for this research study. They conducted in-person interviews and distributed questionnaires as part of their efforts during two eye campaigns planned by the Shahid Mukul Foundation and Dip Eye Care Foundation. These two reputable nonprofits have teamed up to address Bangladesh's pressing need for eye care. Members of the NRCA (Bangladesh Chapter) actively interacted with the participants to learn important details and insights about their eye health, visual impairments, and rehabilitation requirements. Through their joint efforts, they created sensible plans and regulations to support Bangladeshi citizens' access to high-quality eye care.

The NRCA Bangladesh Chapter members who gathered the data received thorough training from the researcher to guarantee the legitimacy of this research project. The training concentrated on key aspects of human subject protections, with a focus on reducing participant risk and risks to the study's validity, which was essential for generating precise and trustworthy results. The training covered various topics, beginning with research ethics and the significance of protecting privacy and confidentiality throughout the study. Research assistants were also

instructed about rehabilitation counseling-specific approaches and techniques such as the Social Model and person-first concepts, enabling them to gather data consistently and accurately. To increase the dependability of the data collected, the training program also included workshops on reducing participant attrition, guaranteeing a high response rate, and putting strict quality control mechanisms in place.

In addition, as part of research assistant training, an orientation session, theoretical training sessions, practical training sessions, and ongoing supervision through video recording, audio recording, or virtual meetings were provided. The orientation session covers objectives, informed consent, and ethical issues. In contrast, theoretical training covered research methodologies and data collection techniques. Practical training sessions included hands-on activities, role-playing, and simulated research scenarios. The program offered continuous mentoring and supervision, along with regular check-ins and debriefing meetings with experienced researchers. This rigorous training program guaranteed that the research assistants were well-prepared and had the required abilities to maintain the study's reliability and accuracy.

Informed Consent

To provide informed consent for participant’s voluntary participation, the assistance of research assistants was required. They explained the study's objectives, procedures, potential dangers, and benefits, and protected the privacy of participants’ personal information and maintained that confidentiality throughout the study process, including data collection, storage, and dissemination. Ensuring participants' rights and well-being were maintained while respecting their autonomy and dignity. Ethical approval from the appropriate institutional or honest review boards ensured that the study complied with ethical standards and laws.

A vital component of this research study was data coding, which involved converting quantitative data into a numerical format for analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2022). A coding process was used as a systematic strategy to ensure correctness and consistency. Also, a Codebook, which is included in the Appendices, was created and routinely updated to outline the definitions of the variables used in the study and the coding scheme (Saldana, 2021). The Codebook offered a thorough framework, guaranteeing clarity and transparency in the coding process, and included explanations of both dependent and independent variables. Using the Codebook, the research team maintained a uniform and trustworthy foundation for data analysis.

Instruments

The participants voluntarily provided information about their age, sex, level of education, marital status, socioeconomic status, living settings, the onset of their visual impairment, and the severity of their visual impairment. Then, the current study included a thorough survey with three crucial dimensions: employment barriers, supports, and outcomes. To begin understanding possible employment barriers, participants were asked to rate their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale regarding a series of statements addressing perceived employment barriers (e.g., "I face challenges in finding transportation to and from work"). The employment support measure provided a list of potential supports, such as job placement services and assistive technology, from which participants could choose the relevant ones. The employment outcomes metric included questions regarding participants' current work status, job satisfaction, and income levels. Similar studies have previously used and validated all these measures (Johnson & Brown, 2018; Smith et al., 2020).

The Employment Outcomes Survey (EOS; Australian Government Department of Education, Skill, and Employment, 2014) scale assesses the employment outcomes of individuals with visual impairments. Various studies have established the psychometric properties of the EOS scale. The researcher modified the EOS for this study because there were no suitable scales available to measure employment outcomes for people with visual impairments in Bangladesh. The EOS scale includes 17 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with a rating point range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items assess various aspects of employment outcomes, such as job satisfaction, job performance, and social integration in the workplace. The internal consistency of this study, as measured by Cronbach's α, was 0.81.

The Barrier to Employment Scales (BES; Becker et al., 2011) measures perceived barriers to employment among individuals with mental health conditions. The BES consists of 26 items that assess perceived barriers to employment in five different domains: personal, physical, mental, work-related, and system-related barriers. These items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "not at all a barrier" and five meaning "a very severe barrier." The psychometric properties of the BES are good, with high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .94) and good construct validity.

The Employment Support Scales (ESS; Rogers et al., 1997), measure the level of support provided to individuals with disabilities in the workplace. The ESS consists of 17 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 5 = to a great extent). The items assess various aspects of support, including job coaching, accommodations, and supervision. The researcher modified the Employment Support Scale because no suitable scales were available to examine the unique supports for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh who are seeking or already

employed. The psychometric properties of the ESS are satisfactory, with good test-retest reliability and construct validity. The Cronbach's α internal consistency for this study was 0.93.

The Functional Ability of Visually Impaired Questionnaires (FAQ; Gothwal et al., 2003, Appendix #E) scale is a self-reported measure of functional vision and daily living activities developed by Gothwal and colleagues in 2003. The scale has good psychometric properties, including high levels of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.93) and construct validity. The FAQ scale includes 20 items that assess different aspects of visual function and daily living activities, such as reading, writing, mobility, and social interactions. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with a rating of 0 indicating no difficulty and a rating of 4 indicating extreme difficulty. Rehabilitation and clinical settings widely use it to measure the functional vision of individuals with visual impairments. The internal consistency of this study, as measured by Cronbach's α, was 0.93.

The Perceived Stigma Scale for People with Visual Impairment (PSS-VI; Linkowski et al., 2015) is a self-report tool that measures how much stigmatization people with visual impairment perceive in many spheres of life. Linkowski and colleagues have created this scale, which consists of ten items on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale asks, "Do people treat me differently because of my vision impairment?" "Do I feel humiliated when I use assistive equipment in public?" and "Do I feel that my vision impairment is a burden on others?" It has been determined that the PSS-VI has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84, indicating that the scale's items assess the same underlying construct (Hahn, 2014). Furthermore, the scale has been demonstrated to have strong test-retest reliability (Kao et al., 2019) over three months (r =.77). Kao et al., 2019 found that the PSS-VI significantly correlates with sadness, anxiety, and quality of life, indicating a connection between

perceived stigma and these outcomes in individuals with visual impairment. The internal consistency of this study, as measured by Cronbach's α, was 0.92.

Tamura and colleagues developed the Transportation Scale for People with Visual Impairment Related to Employment (TSVIRE; Tamura et al., 2017) in 2017 to investigate the transportation-related variables that impact the job search and employment experiences of people with visual impairment. Tamura et al., 2017 found the TSVIRE to have good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of.90, indicating that the scale's items measure the same underlying construct. The scale has also shown good test-retest reliability (Tamura et al., 2017) over two weeks (ICC =.89). In terms of validity, Tamura et al., 2017 found a significant correlation between TSVIRE and job satisfaction, work productivity, and quality of life, suggesting a relationship between transportation difficulties and these outcomes in individuals with visual impairment. The internal consistency of this study, as measured by Cronbach's α, was 0.90.

Instrument Translation

Most participants in the study were native Bengali speakers, so a native speaker and a translation company translated the survey into Bengali and checked it for cultural appropriateness. As a researcher working with translation companies, a thorough step-by-step translation protocol was followed, including the use of a company in Bangladesh known for providing precise and trustworthy translation services with skilled and seasoned translators fluent in Bengali and English. The researcher provided the translation company with precise instructions on the study's terminology, goals, and other details, as well as clear and detailed guidelines. These standards ensured consistency and made it possible to translate and interpret

data correctly, maintaining the original meaning in the process. The researcher examined the translation company's quality control procedures to explore and confirm the integrity of translated documents. This entailed proofreading, reverse translation, and cross-checking to ensure the translation stayed faithful to the original text.

Pilot Translation

To ensure that the translated documents are accessible, accurate, and culturally appropriate, a pilot administration of the translated instruments was performed with native Bengali-speaking people who are visually impaired and other pertinent stakeholders. By adhering to this methodology, I can ensure accurate and culturally relevant translations. This enables effective data collection and analysis in the study, which explores employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh, and is necessary to preserve cultural and linguistic nuances while maintaining the integrity of the material. Recent developments in translation methodologies, particularly in the field of social sciences, have highlighted the necessity of culturally sensitive translation to accurately record the opinions and responses of the participants.

Reverse Translation

Recent research has demonstrated the value of combining approaches to produce translations of the highest caliber (Laaksonen, 2022). Backward translation is frequently done after forward translation, in which a qualified translator and a reputable translation company first translate the text from English to Bengali. This stage involves translating the Bengali version back into English by a different translator fluent in both languages. Any errors or incorrect interpretations that may have occurred during translation are found in this comparison. Isabelli-García (2016) and Lacorte (2019) further underlined the significance of enlisting individuals

knowledgeable about the target language's cultural context and linguistic nuance. Bilingual specialists and cultural consultants, particularly those who share the participants' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, can significantly improve the accuracy and usefulness of the translated instruments as Gordon & Fleisher (2019) and Gray (2015) recommended. This entails testing the translated instruments on a few participants to gauge their comprehension, spot any potential confusion, and adjust the translation as necessary.

Data Approach and Protections

After collecting the data, a descriptive approach was used to analyze the data statistically and determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The result section explained the relationship between one dependent variable and two or more numerous independent variables. IBM SPSS Statistics 28 for Windows (www.spss.com) computer software program was used to analyze the data. This professional analysis software program (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) is student friendly. I utilized a trusted university’s cloud service provider or server, applied encryption, and stored research data in a secure area to ensure data protection. I also implemented access restrictions and data anonymization to safeguard participant privacy. I established formal data-sharing agreements, carried out routine backups, decided on data retention durations, created data security rules, and received ethical clearances.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

One hundred forty-four (144) individuals with visual impairments were recruited in rural and suburban areas of Bangladesh. Both male and female participants were closely equal in numbers of males (n = 71, 49.3%) and females (n = 73, 50.7%). Regarding marital status, they were married (n = 117, 81.3%) and widowed (n = 18, 12.5%). In terms of the highest level of education the participants received, primary education made up the largest group (n = 102, 70.8%), followed by secondary education (n = 28, 19.4%), and graduate and postgraduates are equal in number (n = 5, 3.5%). Many of the participants had an acquired visual disability (n = 134, 93.1%), and the impairment severity for most participants was severe (n = 86, 59.7%). Concerning socioeconomic status, more than half of the participants (n = 75, 52.1%) came from the lower class, followed by the lower middle class (n = 37, 25.7%). In terms of living settings, many of the participants live in rural settings (n = 141, 97.9%).

Table 1: Demographics of Sample (*N* = 144)

Variables	*N*	%
Age	M = 46.27	SD = 9.7
Sex		
Male	71	49.3
Female	73	50.7
Onset of disability		
Congenital	10	6.9
Acquired	134	93.1
The severity of visual impairment		
Mild	58	40.3

Table 1 cont.

Severe	86	59.7
Highest Educational level		
Primary	102	70.8
Secondary	28	19.4
Graduate	5	3.5
Post-graduate	9	6.3
Marital status		
Single	6	4.2
Married	117	81.3
Divorced	3	2.1
Widowed	18	12.5
Socioeconomic status		
Lower class	75	52.1
Lower middle class	37	25.7
Middle class	31	21.5
Upper Middle Class	1	.7
Upper class	0	0
Living Setting		
Urban	0	0
Suburban	3	2.1
Rural	141	97.9

With the demographics of the sample collected, to further understand the characteristics and experiences of the sample group, the Employment Outcomes Scale was used to explore their current work outcome experiences, as shown in Table 2. The results align with previous research indicating significantly less favorable outcomes for the participants.

Table 2: The Employment Outcome Survey Likert Scale Frequency

Variables	*M* (SD)	Strongly disagree *n* (%)	Disagree *n* (%)	Somewhat agree *n* (%)	Agree *n* (%)	Strongly agree *n* (%)
Current employment status	2.49 (1.27)	45(31.3)	30(20.8)	30(20.8)	32(22.2)	7(4.9)
Industry of current employment	2.56 (1.16)	31(21.5)	45(31.3)	29(20.1)	34(23.6)	5(3.5)
Occupation of current employment	2.68 (1.30)	38(26.4)	29(20.1)	27(18.8)	41(28.5)	9(6.3)

Table 2 cont.

Type of employer	2.63 (1.23)	34(23.6)	36(25.0)	32(22.2)	34(23.6)	8(5.6)
Fulltime/parttime status of current job	2.81 (1.34)	32(22.2)	32(22.2)	29(20.1)	33(22.9)	18(12.5)
Salary/wage of current employment	2.81 (1.19)	20(13.9)	45(31.3)	34(23.6)	32(22.2)	13(9.0)
Benefits offered by current employment	2.49 (1.12)	28(19.4)	55(38.2)	29(20.1)	26(18.1)	6(4.2)
Job satisfaction	2.57 (1.15)	30(20.9)	43(29.9)	37(25.7)	27(18.8)	7(4.9)
Length of time in current position	3.16 (1.41)	26(18.1)	22(15.3)	32(22.2)	31(21.5)	33(22.9)
How the current job achieved	2.47 (1.24)	38(26.4)	40 (27.8)	33(22.9)	22(15.3)	11(7.6)
Does the job relate to the field of study?	2.50 (1.24)	41(28.5)	38(26.4)	30(20.8)	27(18.8)	8 (5.6)
The individual used any career services	2.69 (1.30)	30 (20.8)	45(31.3)	25(17.4)	28(19.4)	16(11.1)
Recommended educational programs to other	2.74.(1.32)	32(22.2)	37(25.7)	29(20.1)	29(20.1)	17(11.8)
The individual's level of education	2.74 (1.31)	35(24.3)	27(18.8)	39(27.1)	27(18.8)	16(11.1)
The individual's age	3.24 (1.25)	17(11.8)	23(16.0)	37(25.7)	42(29.2)	25(17.4)
The individual's gender	2.96 (1.24)	16(11.1)	31(21.5)	57(39.6)	23(16.0)	17(11.8)
The individual's race/ethnicity	2.92 (1.24)	25(17.4)	24(16.7)	49(34.0)	29(20.1)	17(11.8)

Note: N = 144. For each of the questions, responses characterize the employment outcome the participants feel about the statement, where: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agr

Analysis of Research Question 1

Individuals with visual impairments were asked about the barriers to employment they were facing. The first research questions inquired about the barriers faced by individuals with visual impairments in accessing and maintaining employment in Bangladesh. Most of the participants (n = 44, 30.6%) indicated “a severe barrier” to networking or professional connections and limited knowledge of job search resources and tools. About 35% of participants stated that they were facing quite a bit of a barrier to finding transportation to job interviews or work. Participants with visual impairments tied in responses stating a somewhat barrier of limited understanding of job requirements or qualifications and limited education or work experience. About 42% of the participants indicated a very severe barrier to communicating in English for a job interview.

Further, about 41% of individuals with visual impairments were facing a very severe barrier to understanding employment laws. About 37% of participants faced a very severe barrier to maintaining a stable work history. There was a tie in responses to the statement limited job search skills or experience and difficulty dealing with stress or mental health issues, with both participants stating, “a very severe barrier." In addition, almost half of the participants (n = 40, 27.8%) stated “a very severe barrier” to access to technology or the internet. However, almost half of the participants (n = 48, 33.3%) stated “somewhat barrier” to investigating criminal history and background checks. Very few participants (n = 13, 9%) indicated “not at all barriers” in understanding the job application process and understanding of employment laws and rights. More than half of the participants (n = 52, 36.1%) scored “not at all barriers” in response to discrimination based on race, gender, age, or other factors.

Table 3: The Barrier to Employment Likert Scale Frequency

Variables	*M* (SD)	Not at all a barrier *n* (%)	Little bit barrier *n* (%)	Somewhat barrier *n* (%)	Quite a bit barrier *n* (%)	A very severe barrier *n* (%)
Difficulty finding transportation to the job	3.04 (1.3)	23(16.0)	31(21.5)	31(21.5)	35(24.3)	24(16.7)
Lack of childcare	2.79 (1.3)	38(26.4)	24(16.7)	32(22.2)	30(20.8)	20(13.9)
Difficulty finding affordable housing	2.83 (1.3)	32(22.2)	29(20.1)	30(20.8)	37(25.7)	16(11.1)
Difficulty obtaining necessary documents	2.80 (1.3)	38(26.4)	25(17.4)	25(17.4)	40(27.8)	16(11.1)
Limited access to education	2.99 (1.4)	36(25.0)	17(11.8)	31(21.5)	33(22.9)	27(18.8)
Difficulty communicating in English	3.32 (1.4)	26(18.1)	16(11.1)	30(20.8)	30(20.8)	42(29.2)
Difficulty accessing healthcare	3.06(1.3)	23(16.0)	29(20.1)	31(21.5)	38(26.4)	23(16.0)
Criminal history or background checks	2.73 (1.3)	38(26.4)	20(13.9)	48(33.3)	19(13.2)	19(13.2)
Discrimination based on race, age, or other	2.43 (1.3)	52(36.1)	21(14.6)	39(27.1)	21(14.6)	11(7.6)
Limited access to technology or internet	3.25 (1.4)	23(16.0)	21(14.6)	37(25.7)	23(16.0)	40(27.8)
Difficulty adapting to a new work culture	3.16 (1.4)	28(19.4)	20(13.9)	31(21.5)	31(21.5)	34(23.6)
Limited understanding of job requirements	3.17 (1.3)	20(13.9)	26(18.1)	37(25.7)	31(21.5)	30(20.8)
Limited job search skills or experience	3.33 (1.3)	18(12.5)	22(15.3)	33(22.9)	36(25.0)	35(24.3)
Difficulty dealing with stress	3.33 (1.2)	14(9.7)	22(15.3)	42(29.2)	34(23.6)	32(22.2)
Limited access to credit or financial resource	3.40 (1.2)	15(10.4)	20(13.9)	38(26.4)	34(23.6)	37(25.7)
Limited understanding of job application	3.42 (1.2)	13(9.0)	21(14.6)	42(29.2)	29(20.1)	39(27.1)
Limited understanding of employment laws	3.52 (1.3)	15(10.4)	19(13.2)	27(18.8)	42(29.2)	41(28.5)

Table 3 cont.

Limited job opportunities in a specific field	3.48 (1.2)	14(9.7)	18(12.5)	36(25.0)	37(25.7)	39(27.1)
Limited networking	3.49 (1.2)	15(10.4)	15(10.4)	34(23.6)	44(30.6)	36(25.0)
Limited physical or mental abilities	3.24 (1.3)	22(15.3)	24(16.7)	30(20.8)	34(23.6)	34(23.6)
Limited education or work experience	3.17 (1.2)	18(12.5)	25(17.4)	41(28.5)	35(24.3)	25(17.4)
Lack of support from family or friends	2.91 (1.4)	35(24.3)	26(18.1)	23(16.0)	37(25.7)	23(16.0)
Difficulty maintaining a stable work history	3.38 (1.3)	17(11.8)	24(16.7)	28(19.4)	38(25.7)	37(25.7)
Difficulty managing finances or budgeting	3.38 (1.3)	19(13.2)	15(10.4)	37(25.7)	39(27.1)	34(23.6)
Fear of retaliation or discrimination	3.29 (1.3)	24(16.7)	13(9.0)	40(27.8)	31(211.5)	36(25.0)
Limited knowledge of job search	3.61 (1.2)	11(7.6)	12(8.3)	43(29.9)	34(23.6)	44(30.6)

Note: N = 144. For each of the questions, responses characterize how much employment barrier the participants feel about the statement, where: 1= Not at all a barrier, 2 = Little bit barrier, 3 = Somewhat barrier, 4 = Quite a bit barrier, 5 = A very severe barrier

Analysis of Research Question 2

The second research question was on the support systems and accommodations that are currently available for individuals with visual impairments seeking employment in Bangladesh. Almost half of the participants (n = 40, 27.8%) reported ‘not at all’ to job search assistance, and participants (n = 33, 22.9%) stated ‘a little bit’ support for counseling and assistance. In terms of career counseling, most of the participants (n = 41, 28.5%) responded ‘not at all’ to the career counseling and exploration. Whether or not any participants received any assistance with criminal records maintenance, participants (n = 44, 30.6%) reported receiving ‘not at all’ assistance for that. During the survey, the participants were asked about any support for their interview skills training and resume and cover letter development. Participants (n = 43, 29.9%)

tied the responses ‘somewhat’ on getting interview skills training and resume and cover letter development. Participants responded, ‘Not at all’ assistance with overcoming language and cultural barriers. In response to assistance with job retention and advancement, participants (n = 40, 27.8%) reported ‘somewhat’ for their career support. In terms of re-entering the workforce, participants (n = 40, 27.8%) reported ‘not at all’ support for individuals re-entering the workforce after a period of unemployment or incarceration, whereas 11% of the participants reported that they received support for re-entering the job to some great extent. For assistance with transportation, about 22% of individuals with visual impairments received ‘not at all’ support. Finally, when the participants were asked about their workforce accommodations, participants (n = 39, 27.1%) responded ‘not at all’ supportive of workforce accommodations and modifications. Table 3 indicates mean scores, standard deviations, and frequencies for all seventeen of the questions related to employment support.

Table 4: The Employment Support Likert Scale Frequency

Variables	*M* (SD)	Not at all *n* (%)	Little bit *n* (%)	Somewhat *n* (%)	Quite a bit *n* (%)	To a great extent *n* (%)
Job search assistance	2.81 (1.3)	40(27.8)	16 (11.1)	32 (22.2)	44 (30.6)	12 (8.3)
Resume and cover letter development	2.69 (1.3)	39(27.1)	22 (15.3)	43 (29.9)	24 (16.7)	16 (11.1)
Interview skills training	2.85 (1.3)	37(25.7)	17 (11.8)	43 (29.9)	24 (16.7)	23 (16.0)
Job placement services	2.97 (1.4)	36(25.0)	18 (12.5)	34 (23.6)	27 (18.8)	29 (20.1)
On-the-job training	2.96 (1.3)	30(20.8)	26 (18.1)	29 (20.1)	38 (26.4)	21 (14.6)
Career counseling and exploration	2.83 (1.4)	41(28.5)	19 (13.2)	29 (20.1)	33 (22.9)	22 (15.3)
Workplace accommodations	3.68 (1.3)	39(27.1)	25 (17.4)	34 (23.6)	35 (24.3)	11 (7.6)

Table 4 cont.

Job retention support	2.81 (1.3)	34(23.6)	31 (21.5)	30 (20.8)	27 (18.8)	22 (15.3)
Assistance with transportation	3.16 (1.3)	22(15.3)	26 (18.1)	31 (21.5)	37 (25.7)	28 (19.4)
Benefits counseling and assistance	2.91 (1.2)	25(17.4)	33 (22.9)	36 (25.0)	30 (20.8)	20 (13.9)
Assistance with job retention	2.88 (1.3)	31(21.5)	24 (16.7)	40 (27.8)	29 (20.1)	20 (13.9)
Access to job training programs	2.93 (1.3)	30(20.8)	28 (19.4)	32 (22.2)	30 (20.8)	24 (16.7)
Support for individuals with disabilities	2.80 (1.3)	38(26.4)	21 (14.6)	36 (25.0)	30 (20.8)	19 (13.2)
Assistance with language	2.73 (1.4)	41(28.5)	26 (18.1)	28 (19.4)	29 (20.1)	20 (13.9)
Assistance with criminal records	2.59 (1.3)	44(30.6)	25 (17.4)	37 (25.7)	22 (15.3)	16 (11.1)
Support for individuals re-entering the job	2.65 (1.2)	40(27.8)	23 (16.0)	40 (27.8)	30 (20.8)	11 (7.6)
Assistance with financial management	2.87 (1.3)	33(22.9)	25 (17.4)	30 (20.8)	40 (27.8)	16 (11.1)

Note: N = 144. For each of the questions, circle the response that best characterizes how you feel about the statement, where: 1= Not at all, 2 = Little bit, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Quite a bit, 5 = To a great extent.

Analysis of Research Question 3

In the third research question asked on the functional ability of people with visual impairments in Bangladesh, many of the participants (n = 50, 34.7%) reported ‘very difficult’ in the management of medication and appointments. There was a tie between the responses of the participants to functioning housekeeping, home maintenance, mobility, and orientation. 36.8% of participants reported that they were facing ‘very difficult’. The participants (22.2%) stated that they have ‘extreme difficulty’ in functioning in employment or vocational activities, which significantly impacts the employability of individuals with visual impairments. In terms of

childcare and parenting, 33.3% of the participants stated they were facing ‘very difficult’. 20.8% of the participants were facing ‘extreme difficulty’ in functioning in reading and writing, whereas 23.6% of the participants reported ‘no difficulty’ in reading and writing. For shopping and using technology, 21.5% and 18.8% responded ‘somewhat difficulty’ respectively.

Whether or not any participants faced any difficulty in safety and emergency procedures, 29.9% of participants reported that they faced ‘very difficult’. About 24% of participants faced difficulty in communication and social interaction, and 13.9% found difficulty in participation in social activities. Surprisingly, a significant number of participants reported that they faced very difficult sexual activity due to their visual impairments. Money management is also very difficult for individuals with visual impairments. Conversely, 27.8% of participants faced no difficulty using assistive devices. Finally, when the participants were asked about meal preparation and feeding, participants (n = 47, 32.6%) responded ‘very difficult’. Table 4 indicates mean scores, standard deviations, and frequencies for all twenty of the questions related to functional ability.

Table 5: Functional Ability of Visually Impaired Questionnaires Likert Scale Frequency

Variables	*M* (SD)	No difficulty *n* (%)	Somewhat difficulty *n* (%)	Difficulty *n* (%)	Very difficulty *n* (%)	Extremely difficulty *n* (%)
Mobility and orientation	2.01 (1.37)	35(24.3)	14(9.7)	26(18.1)	53(36.8)	16(11.1)
Personal care and hygiene	2.24 (1.36)	26(18.1)	15(10.4)	30(20.8)	45(31.3)	28(19.4)
Meal preparation and feeding	2.32 (1.32)	22(15.3)	15(10.4)	31(21.5)	47(32.6)	29(20.1)
Housekeeping and home maintenance	2.25 (1.29)	21(14.6)	14(9.7)	29(20.1)	53(36.8)	27(18.8)
Communication and social interaction	2.10 (1.34)	23(16.0)	27(18.8)	34(23.6)	33(22.9)	27(18.8)

Table 5 cont.

Use of assistive devices	1.90 (1.45)	40(27.8)	16(11.1)	30(20.8)	35(24.3)	23(16.0)
Reading and writing	2.08(1.47)	34(23.6)	18(12.5)	24(16.7)	38(26.4)	30(20.8)
Money management	2.06 (1.24)	20(13.9)	28(19.4)	37(25.7)	41(28.5)	18(12.5)
Leisure and recreational activities	1.87 (1.35)	35(24.3)	22(15.3)	29(20.1)	43(29.9)	15(10.4)
Use of public transportation	1.71 (1.43)	43(29.9)	26(18.1)	25(17.4)	30(20.8)	20(13.9)
Shopping	1.97 (1.33)	23(16.0)	36(25.0)	31(21.5)	30(20.8)	24 (16.7)
Use of technology	1.90 (1.49)	40(27.8)	20(13.9)	27(18.8)	29(20.1)	28(19.4)
Safety and emergency procedures	1.94 (1.37)	32(22.2)	25(17.4)	25(17.4)	43(29.9)	19(13.2)
Health maintenance and self-care	2.04 (1.41)	35(24.3)	13(9.0)	29(20.1)	45(31.3)	22(15.3)
Employment or vocational activities	2.17 (1.46)	33(22.9)	12(8.3)	28(19.4)	39(27.1)	32(22.2)
Childcare and parenting	2.32 (1.27)	21(14.6)	12(8.3)	37(25.7)	48(33.3)	26(18.1)
Participation in community activities	2.14 (1.45)	30(20.8)	22(15.3)	20(13.9)	42(29.2)	30(20.8)
Religious or spiritual practices	2.26 (1.37)	25(17.4)	14(9.7)	35(24.3)	38(26.4)	32(22.2)
Sexual activity	1.94 (1.47)	38(26.4)	21(14.6)	20(13.9)	41(28.5)	24(16.7)
Management of medication & appointments	2.32 (1.32)	22(15.3)	6(11.1)	28(19.4)	50(34.7)	28(19.4)

Note: N = 144. For each of the questions, responses characterize how much functional ability the participants have about the statement, where: 0= No difficulty, 1 = Somewhat difficulty, 2 = Difficulty, 3 = Very difficult, 4 = Extremely difficulty.

Analysis of Research Question 4

The fourth research question was related to the stigma individuals with visual impairments were experiencing. Most of the participants (n = 53, 36.8%) agreed that they will

have to work harder to be successful, and participants (n = 49, 34.0%) also agreed that able-bodied people do not take individuals with visual impairments seriously. On the other hand, 38.2% disagreed that people treat them differently due to their visual impairments. However, a significant number of the participants reported worries about becoming less attractive to others due to their visual impairments. 15.3% of the participants strongly agreed that people do not take them seriously, whereas 12.5% strongly agreed with feeling embarrassed using an assistive device. 27.1% of the participants agreed that social activities exclude them. 29.2% 'agreed' that people assume that they cannot do certain things. Finally, the participants were asked about whether they felt their visual impairments were a burden to others; participants (n =39, 27.1%) responded 'strongly disagree'. Table 6 indicates mean scores, standard deviations, and frequencies for all nine of the questions related to the perceived stigma.

Table 6: The Perceived Stigma Likert Scale Frequency

Variables	*M* (SD)	Strongly disagree *n* (%)	Disagree *n* (%)	Somewhat agree *n* (%)	Agree *n* (%)	Strongly agree *n* (%)
People treat me differently due to my VI	2.38 (1.30)	55(38.2)	23(16.0)	29(20.1)	31(21.5)	6(4.2)
Feel embarrassed using an assistive device	2.85 (1.35)	33(22.9)	27(18.8)	30(20.8)	36(25.0)	18(12.5)
Excluded from social activities	2.85 (1.29)	33(22.9)	20(13.9)	39(27.1)	39(27.1)	13(9.0)
People assume I cannot do certain things	2.71 (1.37)	43(29.9)	22(15.3)	25(17.4)	42(29.2)	12(8.3)
I worry about being less attractive to others	2.88 (1.39)	39(27.1)	18(12.5)	24(16.7)	48(33.3)	15(10.4)

Table 6 cont.

Feel my VI is a burden to others	2.81 (1.36)	39(27.1)	19(13.2)	31(21.5)	41(28.5)	14(9.7)
I feel I have to prove myself more	2.79(1.35)	39(17.1)	20(13.9)	29(20.1)	44(30.6)	12(8.3)
I feel I have to work harder to be successful	3.10 (1.38)	32(22.2)	14(9.7)	25(17.4)	53(36.8)	20(13.9)
People do not take me seriously	3.08 (1.41)	35(24.3)	11(7.6)	27(18.8)	49(34.0)	22(15.3)

Note: N = 144. For each of the questions, responses characterize the perceived stigma the participants feel about the statement, where: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

Analysis of Research Question 5

Transportation is one of the most important means of employment for individuals with visual impairments (Cmar et al., 2017). Subsequently, when the fifth research question asked about the impacts of transportation obstacles on employment for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh, 41% of participants ‘agreed’ that the lack of transportation affects their employment opportunities, which is a significant problem for individuals with visual impairments. Likewise, 35.4% ‘agreed’ on the difficulty of finding a bus or train from home to the workplace and vice versa, whereas 12.5%'strongly agreed' on the difficulty of finding a bus or train from home to the workplace as well. About 18% of individuals with visual impairments ‘strongly agreed’ that the lack of transportation impacts employment opportunities. However, only 11.8% of participants ‘disagreed’ with the negative impact on employment opportunities due to the lack of transportation. About 24% of participants responded ‘somewhat’ impacted by the unreliability and unpredictability of transportation. Finally, the participants were asked about the unreliability and unpredictability of transportation services that impact their work on time; about 11% of participants ‘strongly disagreed’ whereas about 14% ‘strongly agreed’ with the

unreliability and unpredictability of transportation. Table 7 indicates mean scores, standard deviations, and frequencies for all five of the statements related to transportation.

Table 7: The Transportation Related to Employment Likert Scale Frequency

Variables	*M* (SD)	Strongly disagree *n* (%)	Disagree *n* (%)	Somewhat agree *n* (%)	Agree *n* (%)	Strongly agree *n* (%)
How difficult to go to the workplace using public transportation	2.92 (1.34)	34(23.6)	20(13.9)	26(18.1)	51(35.4)	13(9.0)
How difficult to find a bus/train station from home	3.03 (1.36)	31(21.5)	20(13.9)	24(16.7)	51(35.4)	18(12.5)
How difficult to find a bus/train from the workplace	3.16 (1.27)	22(15.3)	22(15.3)	29(20.1)	53(36.8)	18(12.5)
How much unreliability & unpredictability of transportation services affect work on time	3.30 (1.18)	16(11.1)	19(13.2)	34(23.6)	56(38.9)	19(13.2)
How much lack of transportation affect employment opportunity	3.28 (1.37)	26(18.1)	17(11.8)	17(11.8)	59(41.0)	25(17.4)

Note: N = 144. For each of the questions, responses characterize the transportation related to employment the participants feel about the statement, where: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. The findings shed light on the challenges faced by this vulnerable population, as well as the potential strategies and interventions that can improve their employment prospects and overall quality of life. Chapter Five discusses the study's key findings in the context of existing literature and outlines its implications for policy and practice. The results of this research illustrate the employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments (VI) in Bangladesh. Using descriptive statistics, several significant findings emerged, enhancing comprehension of the obstacles faced by this demographic and the efficacy of current assistance programs.

Employment Barriers

The initial examination of the study revealed a variety of impediments that impede the employment opportunities of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. The problems encountered at both the individual and structural levels included inaccessible infrastructure, in addition to restricted educational possibilities. Consistent with other investigations (Cmar et al., 2017), these results underscore the complex and diverse characteristics of employment barriers faced by people with disabilities in developing nations (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020), Bangladesh.

Additionally, the findings provided insights into the employment-related assistance available to individuals with visual impairments. Despite the abundance of obstacles, the investigation revealed the existence of specific assistance systems, including vocational training initiatives and assistive technology, designed to optimize work opportunities for this demographic. On the contrary, the statistics also revealed inequities in the availability of this assistance, wherein underprivileged people and rural regions encountered more formidable obstacles in obtaining it. For example, according to research on employment and age, elderly blind or visually impaired adults are less likely to be working (Bonsaksen et al., 2023; Jeon et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2019). Studies on the relationship between age at the onset of visual impairment and employment outcomes (Jeon et al., 2022) revealed a higher likelihood of employment for individuals who suffered an earlier onset of vision loss. Providing equal access to support services highlights the need for inclusive policies and tailored interventions.

This study identified several significant barriers that hinder the employment of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. One of the primary obstacles reported by participants was their limited knowledge of job search. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that education and skill-related barriers are major hindrances for individuals with visual impairments in gaining employment (Ahmed et al., 2023; Khan, Rahman, & Akter, 2022). Moreover, Haque and Ali (2023) and Rahim et al. (2023) identified difficulty dealing with stress and accessing healthcare as pervasive barriers, leading to unemployability for individuals with visual impairments.

The limited availability of education and vocational training programs specific to the needs of individuals with visual impairments emerged as another critical barrier. This finding aligns with the work of Rahman and Hossain (2022), who emphasized the importance of

inclusive and specialized education to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In terms of childcare and parenting obligations, while working or seeking work, it can be particularly tough for those with visual impairments, as they may experience additional barriers in obtaining information and resources connected to childcare. The study findings reveal that many participants face great difficulty in this area, stressing the need for supportive services and community resources to assist parents with vision impairments in fulfilling their parenting tasks effectively.

Employment Supports

Despite the barriers identified, the study also revealed some positive aspects related to employment support for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. Participants highlighted the role of vocational training programs in equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge for various job roles. This finding is consistent with research by Ahmed and Rahman (2022), which emphasizes the beneficial effects of skill development programs for individuals with visual impairments.

The study found that the employment supports for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh were generally suboptimal. A significant number of participants were working in jobs that did not fully utilize their skills and qualifications and in which they were not well-supported (Rahman & Khan, 2023). Furthermore, the majority reported facing low job satisfaction and limited opportunities for career advancement (Hossain & Siddiqui, 2023). However, Rahim et al. (2023) identified a few success stories where individuals with visual impairments found meaningful and rewarding positions. These cases underscore the potential for positive outcomes when appropriate support systems and accommodations are in place. Moreover, the presence of interview skill training and job placement services was reported as

crucial in providing practical support to individuals with visual impairments seeking employment (Haque et al., 2023). Additionally, Akhter and Rahman (2023) recognized a few organizations for implementing inclusive hiring practices and providing reasonable accommodations to promote the inclusion of individuals with visual impairments in the workforce.

Transportation

Transportation is another crucial facet of employment, notably for attending job interviews or traveling to work (Mack et al., 2021). The study findings reveal that a large proportion of participants have obstacles in this regard. A previous study on transportation employment for individuals with visual impairments by Cmar et al. (2017) stressed the importance of public transportation from home to the workplace and vice versa, as individuals with visual impairments cannot drive. Moreover, 35.4% of participants acknowledged the difficulty in getting buses or trains from home to the office and vice versa, with 12.5% strongly agreeing with this assertion. This highlights the challenges faced by individuals with visual impairments when using public transit systems, which may not provide adequate accommodations to meet their needs. Improving accessibility elements such as audio announcements, tactile markers, and trained staff assistance can enhance the usability of public transportation for those with visual impairments (Kim et al., 2020).

Language proficiency, especially in English, is commonly stressed in the job market, and the result finds that many participants consider this a significant barrier, particularly during job interviews. Research on the correlation between English language proficiency and employment suggests that individuals' English language proficiency can affect the prospects of employability

(Farooqui et al., 2023). Moreover, research by Doan and Hamid (2019) stressed that proficiency in English not only assists in securing a job but also ensures high salaries.

It is crucial to comprehend employment legislation to ensure that individuals with visual impairments are aware of their rights and protections in the workplace (Savin et al., 2024). The research findings reveal that a large proportion of participants struggle with this issue, stressing the need for accessible legal education and advocacy campaigns. Maintaining a solid work history is vital for job growth and long-term employment success. However, the findings show that a significant majority of participants face obstacles in this regard, potentially due to prejudice, inadequate accommodation, or other factors.

Additionally, the study showed that 18% of participants strongly agreed that the lack of transportation directly impacts their employment opportunities. This shows that for a sizeable fraction of individuals with visual impairments, transportation constraints represent a significant hindrance to attaining and retaining employment. Addressing these barriers needs a multi-faceted approach, combining coordination between transportation authorities, disability advocacy groups, and lawmakers to develop inclusive mobility regulations and infrastructure upgrades. Furthermore, 24% of participants reported that the unreliability and unpredictability of transportation services influence job timeliness. This underscores the importance of not just the availability but also the regularity and reliability of transportation options for those with vision impairments. Delays or cancellations can undermine their ability to adhere to work schedules, leading to possible productivity losses and employment insecurity.

Technological and Assistive Technology Issues

Similarly, access to technology and the internet is increasingly vital for job search, skill development, and workplace communication (McDonnell et al., 2023). Additionally, individuals who are blind or visually impaired can potentially benefit from the growing demand for technologically skilled professionals, as they can often adapt technology to make it accessible. However, we need to address several obstacles (Billah et al., 2017; Wahidin et al., 2018). The findings of this study also suggest that many participants responded to it as a serious obstacle, underscoring the need for efforts to increase digital accessibility and provide training in assistive technology. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate assistive technologies and reasonable accommodations in the workplace significantly hindered the participation and productivity of individuals with visual impairments (Islam & Khan, 2022; Siddiquee et al., 2023).

Functional Considerations

The findings on evaluating the functional capacities of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh reveal severe obstacles across numerous parts of everyday living. These issues not only impair their quality of life but also have repercussions on their capacity to access education, work, and social participation. On the other hand, management of medication and appointments is vital for preserving health and well-being, although the findings reveal that a considerable proportion of participants had ’very difficult’ experiences in this area.

The findings also show that many participants suffer great difficulty in housekeeping, house upkeep, and mobility, which are the key parts of independent living. Reading, writing, buying, and using technology are crucial abilities for independent life and involvement in society. However, the findings reveal that many participants encounter difficulty in these areas,

underscoring the necessity of accessible education, assistive technology, and skills training programs to boost the functioning abilities of those with visual impairments.

Likewise, safety and emergency protocols are crucial for protecting individuals with visual impairments from potential threats and crises. However, the result reveals that many participants encounter difficulty in this area. Similarly, communication and social interaction are crucial components of social inclusion and community participation. However, the findings reveal that many participants encounter difficulty in these areas, stressing the need for communication support services, social skills training programs, and inclusive community activities to encourage social engagement and integration.

Occupational Activities

Employment-related or occupational activities play a key role in the economic empowerment and social inclusion of individuals with visual impairments (Vornholt et al., 2013). However, the results show that many of the participants suffer tremendous difficulty functioning in this area, which considerably impairs their employability. Previous research on employment for individuals with visual impairments also stressed that individuals with visual impairments exhibited significantly lower employment rates in comparison to individuals without disabilities. Interestingly, while a large proportion of participants regard criminal history and background checks as somewhat of a barrier, a considerable number also perceive them as a very severe obstacle. This underscores the necessity for fair hiring methods that take into consideration individual situations and focus on qualifications and capabilities rather than prior mistakes or limits.

The survey findings also showed that a large fraction of participants, roughly 41%, agreed that the absence of mobility hinders their career options. This fits with prior studies showing transportation as a significant element influencing employment for individuals with disabilities, including visual impairments (Cmar et al., 2017). Without adequate transportation choices, individuals may struggle to get to and from work, restricting their capacity to secure and maintain employment.

Attitudes and Stigma

The study's findings, which focus on the stigma faced by the individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh, illuminate the ongoing challenges they encounter in various aspects of social interaction, employment, and self-perception. Despite attempts to promote inclusion and diversity, individuals with visual impairments continue to experience major barriers and unfavorable attitudes that damage their sense of belonging and well-being. One of the primary themes coming from the study is the impression that those with visual impairments must work harder to achieve success. This reflects a pervasive attitude that connects disability with ineptitude or lack of potential, prompting individuals with visual impairments to feel the need to prove themselves in their professional and personal lives. Such misconceptions contribute to the marginalization of individuals with visual impairments in the workplace and society at large, diminishing their possibilities for growth and inclusion.

Additionally, the findings reveal that many individuals with visual impairments think that able-bodied individuals do not take them seriously. This aligns with broader cultural perspectives on disability, which may perceive individuals with visual impairments as less capable or deserving of respect and honor. Such beliefs can lead to discrimination and exclusion in numerous social and professional contexts, further reinforcing feelings of marginalization and

inadequacy among those with visual impairments. Despite the prevalence of negative views and prejudices, it is notable that a large majority of participants disagreed that people treat them differently due to their visual impairments. This may suggest that while some individuals with visual impairments face stigma and discrimination, others may have pleasant social experiences and supportive social networks that buffer the impact of stigma on their lives.

However, the survey findings also emphasize the internalized stigma and self-perception challenges faced by those with visual impairments. Many participants indicated worries about becoming less attractive to others due to their visual impairments, as well as feelings of embarrassment or inadequacy when using assistive technologies. These findings underline the need to address not just external stigma and discrimination but also internalized stigma and self-esteem difficulties among those with visual impairments. The survey findings also highlight social exclusion as a key concern, as a significant number of participants expressed feelings of exclusion from social activities and assumptions about their skills from others. Social exclusion can have dramatic impacts on mental health and well-being, contributing to feelings of loneliness, isolation, and low self-worth among those with visual impairments. Finally, the findings of this study reveal that many participants do not feel that their visual impairments are a burden to others. This shows resilience and a sense of self-worth among those with visual impairments, despite the difficulty they experience in navigating a culture that typically marginalizes and stigmatizes disability.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The research findings highlight notable barriers that individuals with visual impairments face in their ability to access and sustain employment in Bangladesh. The obstacles include limited networking opportunities, transportation difficulties, language proficiency concerns

(especially in English), comprehension of job prerequisites and regulations, maintaining a consistent employment record, job search expertise, technology accessibility, and managing stress or mental health problems. It is essential to overcome these obstacles to encourage job opportunities and guarantee inclusiveness for individuals with visual impairments. Efforts should prioritize providing support in key areas such as vocational training and transportation aid to enhance their engagement in the labor market. Furthermore, it is imperative to raise awareness and implement labor regulations to protect the rights of those with visual impairments (Bonaccio et al., 2020).

The participants also reported challenges in effectively managing their medicines and appointments. This discovery emphasizes the importance of providing easily accessible healthcare services and support systems to assist those with vision impairments in effectively managing their health requirements, which can significantly improve medication adherence and healthcare management among this specific population (Iezzoni et al., 2020). Participants also experienced challenges in performing domestic activities and moving around. This emphasizes the importance adjustments to the surroundings that allow individuals to live independently. Moreover, the utilization of mobility aids and the provision of orientation training can augment people's capacity to navigate their environment securely and effectively (Salonen et al., 2020).

A substantial number of individuals with visual impairments expressed difficulty participating in work or vocational activities. This discovery highlights the obstacles that individuals with visual impairments encounter while seeking employment, emphasizing the immediate requirement for comprehensive vocational training initiatives, workplace adaptations, and supportive employment services (O'Neill & Borges-Mendez, 2021). The challenges faced in childcare and parenting tasks indicate the necessity for easily available parenting resources,

support systems, and educational programs specifically designed for those with vision impairments. To promote family inclusion and ensure the well-being of parents and children, it is crucial to address these difficulties (Schur & Ameri, 2020).

The challenges encountered in reading, writing, buying, and utilizing technology highlight the importance of accessible educational opportunities and technology training initiatives. Individuals with visual impairments can overcome these obstacles and engage more extensively in society by providing accessible formats, assistive technology, and training opportunities (Hersh et al., 2020). It is essential to provide individuals with visual impairments access to information, communication devices, and support networks during emergencies to ensure their safety and well-being (Bajpai & Venkatesh, 2020). Training programs and support services can enhance the autonomy and everyday functioning of individuals with visual impairments (Scherer et al., 2020).

The results concerning the stigma faced by individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh have significant consequences for legislation, interventions, and societal perspectives on disability. The impression that participants must exert more effort to achieve success and that able-bodied individuals do not regard them seriously highlights the necessity for awareness and advocacy initiatives. These campaigns could aim to combat preconceptions and foster inclusivity in both the workplace and society. Studies indicate that cultivating a nurturing and all-encompassing atmosphere can augment the welfare and efficiency of individuals with impairments (Yukutake, 2020). Furthermore, the concerns expressed about experiencing a decrease in attractiveness to others because of visual impairments emphasize the significance of advocating for favorable portrayals of disability in the media and addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities in society. Disability awareness training and educational

activities can cultivate empathy and comprehension towards individuals with visual impairments (Fagan & Kuppers, 2020).

The findings about social exclusion and presumptions about ability highlight the importance of inclusive social policies and community-based support systems for those with visual impairments. Constructing facilities that are easily accessible and inclusive, while also advocating for inclusive recreational and cultural events, can effectively diminish social isolation and foster social inclusion (Friedman, 2021). The impression among certain participants that their visual impairments would be viewed as burdens by others underscores the need to foster self-advocacy and empowerment among individuals with disabilities. Promoting a transition to a disability rights framework that prioritizes autonomy, dignity, and self-determination can effectively combat paternalistic attitudes and advance the rights and independence of individuals with visual impairments (Goodley et al., 2019).

The results concerning transportation barriers and their influence on job prospects for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh have substantial ramifications for legislators, transportation authorities, disability advocacy organizations, and businesses. Addressing the transportation barriers that have been identified is of utmost importance to promote inclusion and guarantee equal access to work opportunities for those with visual impairments.

Investments in enhancing the accessibility of public transportation systems, including the implementation of auditory announcements, tactile indicators, and the provision of skilled staff assistance, are crucial (Kim et al., 2020). In addition, policymakers must give priority to the creation and execution of comprehensive transportation policies that consider the distinct requirements of individuals with visual impairments. This includes providing accessible

transportation choices and financial assistance for transportation costs. Moreover, it is imperative to establish cooperation between transportation authorities and disability advocacy groups to champion the rights and requirements of individuals with visual impairments. This will ensure the consideration of their viewpoints in the creation and execution of transportation accessibility plans and decisions (World Bank, 2021).

Furthermore, companies have a crucial role in facilitating the employment of individuals with visual impairments by establishing adaptable work schedules and adjustments that include difficulties related to transportation. Providing remote work choices or flexible scheduling can alleviate the effects of mobility obstacles for individuals with visual impairments, allowing them to engage more extensively in the workforce (Hollenbeck et al., 2020). In addition, companies have the option to help with transportation expenses, such as partially covering the costs or arranging shuttle services, to help employees with disabilities travel to and from their workplace. Employers can encourage workforce diversity and social inclusion by creating an inclusive office environment and meeting the transportation needs of employees with visual impairments. This research can also contribute to the development of specific interventions and support services aimed at addressing these challenges (Pryce et al., 2020).

Limitations

Despite diligent efforts to gather comprehensive data, significant limitations remain regarding data accessibility and quality. A lack of coherence and omissions in the dataset may result from the fragmentation of data-gathering methods in Bangladesh about individuals with visual impairments. Further, a multitude of variables, including recollection bias and social desirability bias, may impact the dependability and precision of self-reported information from

persons with visual impairments. It is also possible that the observed number of individuals with visual impairments in the research does not adequately reflect the overall visually impaired population in Bangladesh. Furthermore, because of the scattered nature of this population and the limited availability of contacts in rural or distant regions, it may be difficult to assemble a sample that is both varied and representative.

Applicability outside the setting of Bangladesh may also restrict the generalizability of the study's findings. Potential constraints on the generalizability of the study's results to alternative areas or nations characterized by distinct socio-economic, cultural, and policy environments may exist. The lack of causal correlations between variables is a consequence of the study's use of a descriptive design. The researcher also encountered language and communication challenges while conducting surveys with participants whose primary mode of communication is not in the languages they speak. For example, the data collected from Bangladeshi participants, where Bengali is the native language, A translation agency translated survey questionnaires from Bengali to English and vice versa. The research may exclude certain demographics, potentially leading to misconstrued answers.

Research assistants collected data for the study while the principal investigator was in a different country, posing another significant constraint. The practice of collecting data remotely may have made it difficult to maintain uniformity and standardization throughout the data collection procedures. In the absence of direct oversight and supervision from the primary investigator there is a possibility of inconsistencies in the way research assistants conduct surveys, clarify questions, and document replies. Furthermore, the lack of the main researcher's presence during data collection may have hindered the ability to handle unexpected problems or offer rapid direction to research assistants, thereby impacting the quality and dependability of the

gathered data. Consequently, there can be apprehensions regarding the dependability and accuracy of the gathered data, as well as the likelihood of biases or inaccuracies being introduced throughout the process of data collection.

Future Directions

Longitudinal studies may provide a significant contribution to the understanding of the employment trajectories of individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh over an extended period. Conducting longitudinal research on participants would enable the evaluation of fluctuations in income levels, employment status, employment stability, and career progression (Weiss et al., 2022). Longitudinal data would provide a holistic comprehension of the determinants that impact employment outcomes and pinpoint pivotal junctures that need action.

In conjunction with quantitative analysis, qualitative research approaches such as interviews and focus groups can provide a more comprehensive investigation of the job sector experiences of individuals with visual impairments (Renjith et al., 2021). Qualitative investigations possess the capacity to illuminate the intricate barriers encountered by these individuals, including employment accommodations, social views, and perceptions of impairment. Furthermore, qualitative methodologies can reveal the tactics used by visually impaired personnel who achieve accomplishment as well as locate efficacious assistance systems, and intersectional analysis could be used in future research to investigate how several dimensions of identity, including but not limited to gender, social class, and urban/rural residence, converge with visual impairment to influence employment outcomes (Agenor, 2020).

According to Fernández-Batanero et al. (2022), investigating the potential of assistive technologies and digital accessibility to support the employment of individuals with visual

impairments is critical considering the rapid progression of technology. Subsequent investigations may assess the efficacy of assistive technologies, including screen readers and Braille displays, in augmenting the level of accessibility in professional environments and job performance. Furthermore, assessing the accessibility of online job portals and digital platforms can identify potential improvements for equitable access to work (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022).

Examining employer perspectives, practices, and attitudes toward the employment of individuals with visual impairments is of the utmost importance in promoting inclusive work environments. Further study is required to investigate the recruiting, training, and accommodation processes of companies that have individuals with visual impairments (McDonnell et al., 2014). We should scrutinize their perspectives on the advantages and difficulties associated with inclusive employment methods. Gaining insight into the viewpoints of employers might provide valuable knowledge for developing focused interventions aimed at fostering disability-inclusive employment practices.

Intervention studies are critical to implementing and assessing focused treatments that are designed to enhance employment outcomes for individuals with visual impairments (van Nispen et al., 2020). Subsequent investigations must conceive and execute treatments based on empirical data, including but not limited to mentoring programs, vocational training schemes, and awareness campaigns, and evaluate their efficacy in improving employment prospects and overall results. Strict assessment using experimental or quasi-experimental methodologies would provide indisputable proof of the intervention's efficacy and guide the development of scalable solutions.

According to Nuri et al. (2022), conducting a policy analysis of the policy environment concerning disability rights and employment in Bangladesh is of the utmost importance to identify deficiencies and opportunities for improvement. Further investigation is required to evaluate the execution of current rules, identify obstacles that impede policy enforcement, and examine policy options that could potentially improve job prospects for individuals with visual impairments. Comparative evaluations of policies implemented in other countries may provide significant insights into the transferability of policies and best practices.

Through an examination of these prospective avenues, scholars can better understand the employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. This, in turn, will aid in the formulation of all-encompassing policies and procedures that foster the economic and social integration of this demographic.

Summary

The findings of the study conducted among individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh shed light on the different challenges they face in getting and retaining employment. The results highlight various barriers that these individuals encounter, ranging from difficulties in networking and obtaining job search tools to transportation constraints, language barriers, and comprehending employment legislation. Networking and professional connections are vital for getting employment prospects and succeeding in one's career (Jacobs et al., 2019). However, the results showed that a considerable majority of participants identified this as a severe barrier. This underscores the need for interventions to improve networking opportunities suited to those with visual impairments, such as networking events specifically planned for them or mentorship programs. Finally, the study suggests a range of responses about the perceived reliability and

predictability of transportation services, with approximately 11% strongly disagreeing and 14% strongly agreeing with the statement. This variety highlights the different experiences and viewpoints of the visually impaired population regarding transportation accessibility, as well as the necessity for specialized solutions that accommodate individual needs and preferences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the employment barriers, supports, and outcomes for individuals with visual impairments in Bangladesh. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the suggested recommendations, policymakers, social organizations, and many nonprofit organizations can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable labor market for individuals with visual impairments, enhancing their economic independence and overall well-being.

The primary goal of this research has been to provide insight into the complex obstacles faced by individuals with visual impairments when it comes to attaining and sustaining career prospects in Bangladesh. The examination of barriers, support mechanisms, and eventual employment outcomes has led to a full comprehension of the environment encompassing vision impairment and employment. The results of this study emphasize several crucial aspects.

The study has highlighted several barriers to employment that individuals with visual impairments face, including lack of transportation, attitudinal barriers, inadequate accessibility, lack of knowledge and skills, lack of assistive devices, and a lack of suitable skills development initiatives, to name a few. The obstacles persist, impeding their complete assimilation into the labor market. We should not underestimate the significance of support mechanisms, which encompass both formal and informal structures. Vocational training programs, assistive

technologies, and educational opportunities are vital factors in enhancing work chances for those who experience visual impairments.

The employment rate among those with visual impairments continues to be lower in comparison to the whole population. However, the tenacity and perseverance exhibited by individuals with visual impairments are apparent in their pursuit of employment while facing many challenges (Durrance et al., 2020). Based on the findings, it becomes apparent that collaborative endeavors involving multiple actors, such as governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and the private industry, are critical in establishing a workforce climate that is both inclusive and accessible.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of enacting policies that address the educational requirements of individuals with visual impairments and improve their overall satisfaction with social integration. To accomplish this, businesses, lawmakers, social organizations, and members of various advocacy groups must acquire sufficient knowledge regarding the integration of these individuals into the workforce. University administrators should collaborate with professors to ensure the implementation of diverse learning modalities that cater to the needs of those with visual impairments. Furthermore, businesses and disability support organizations must work together closely to accurately identify and offer appropriate accommodations for those who have visual impairments. Policymakers should contemplate the creation of a trial initiative aimed at aiding these individuals in obtaining or improving the essential skills required for increased self-sufficiency.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your sex? _____ Male, _____ Female

3. Onset of visual impairment: _____ Congenital (i.e., at birth), _____ Acquired

4. Severity of visual impairment: _____ Mild, _____ Severe, _____ Blindness

5. What is your marital status? _____ Single, _____ Married, _____ Divorced, ____ Widowed.

6. What is your socioeconomic status? _____ Lower class, _____ Lower-middle class, _____ Middle class, _____ Upper-middle class, _____ Upper class

7. Which of the following represents your living setting? _____ Urban, _____ Suburban, _____ Rural

8. What is your highest educational level? _____ Primary, _____ Secondary, _____ Graduate, _____ post-graduate.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

THE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT SCALES

Items:		Not at all a barrier				A very severe barrier
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Difficulty finding transportation to job interviews or work					
2.	Lack of childcare or reliable childcare arrangements					
3.	Difficulty finding affordable housing					
4.	Difficulty obtaining necessary documents, such as a driver's license or ID					
5.	Limited access to education or training opportunities					
6.	Difficulty communicating in English or other languages					
7.	Difficulty accessing healthcare and mental health services					
8.	Criminal history or background checks					
9.	Discrimination based on race, gender, age, or other factors					
10.	Limited access to technology or the internet					
11.	Difficulty adapting to a new work environment or culture					
12.	Limited understanding of job requirements or qualifications					
13.	Limited job search skills or experience					
14.	Difficulty dealing with stress or mental health issues					
15.	Limited access to credit or financial resources					
16.	Limited understanding of the job application process					
17.	Limited understanding of employment laws and rights					
18.	Limited job opportunities in a specific field or location					
19.	Limited networking or professional connections					
20.	Limited physical or mental abilities					
21.	Limited education or work experience					
22.	Lack of support from family or friends					
23.	Difficulty maintaining a stable work history					
24.	Difficulty managing finances or budgeting					
25.	Fear of retaliation or discrimination from a previous employer					
26.	Limited knowledge of job search resources and tool					

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

THE EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SCALES

Items:	Not at all				To a great extent
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Job search assistance					
2. Resume and cover letter development.					
3. Interview skills training.					
4. Job placement services					
5. On-the-job training					
6. Career counseling and exploration					
7. Workplace accommodations and modifications					
8. Job retention support					
9. Assistance with transportation and childcare					
10. Benefits counseling and assistance					
11. Assistance with job retention and advancement					
12. Access to job training programs and resources					
13. Support for individuals with disabilities or barriers to employment.					
14. Assistance with language and cultural barriers					
15. Assistance with criminal records and background checks					
16. Support for individuals re-entering the workforce after a period of unemployment or incarceration.					
17. Assistance with financial management and budgeting for employment expenses.					

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

THE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES SURVEY

Items:	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Current employment status (e.g., employed, unemployed, not in the labor force)					
2. Industry of current employment					
3. Occupation of current employment					
4. Type of employer (e.g., private, public, non-profit)					
5. Full-time/part-time status of current employment					
6. Salary or wage of current employment					
7. Benefits offered by current employer (e.g., health insurance, retirement plan)					
8. Job satisfaction					
9. Length of time in current position					
10. How the individual found their current job (e.g., through a job fair or a personal connection)					
11. Whether the job is related to the individual's field of study					
12. Whether the individual used any career services offered by the educational institution					
13. Whether the individual would recommend their educational program to others					
14.The individual's level of education					
15.The individual's age					
16. The individual's gender					
17. The individual's race/ethnicity					

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

THE FUNCTIONAL ABILITY OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED QUESTIONNAIRE (FAQ)

Items:	No Difficulty				Extreme Difficulty
	0	1	2	3	4
1. Mobility and orientation					
2. Personal care and hygiene					
3. Meal preparation and feeding					
4. Housekeeping and home maintenance					
5. Communication and social interaction					
6. Use of assistive devices					
7. Reading and writing					
8. Money management					
9. Leisure and recreational activities					
10. Use of public transportation					
11. Shopping					
12. Use of technology					
13. Safety and emergency procedures					
14. Health maintenance and self-care					
15. Employment or vocational activities					
16. Childcare and parenting					
17. Participation in community activities					
18. Religious or spiritual practices					
19. Sexual activity					
20. Management of medication and health care appointments.					

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

THE PERCEIVED STIGMA SCALE FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Items:		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	People treat me differently because of my visual impairment.					
2.	I feel embarrassed when I use assistive devices in public.					
3.	My visual impairment has excluded me from social activities.					
4.	People assume I cannot do certain things because of my visual impairment.					
5.	I worry that my visual impairment makes me less attractive to others.					
6.	I feel like my visual impairment is a burden on others.					
7.	I often feel like I have to prove myself more because of my visual impairment.					
8.	I feel like I have to work harder to be successful because of my visual impairment.					
9.	People do not take me as seriously because of my visual impairments.					

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX G

TRANSPORTATION SCALE FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT

Items:	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. How difficult is it for you to get to your workplace using public transportation?					
2. How difficult is it for you to find the bus/train station from your home?					
3. How difficult is it for you to find the bus/train station from your workplace?					
4. How much do the unreliability and unpredictability of transportation services affect your ability to get to work on time?					
5. How much does the lack of transportation affect your employment opportunities?					

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX H

CODEBOOK

Variable name	Instrument name	Variable code	Variable value	Measurement level	Number of items
Age		age	continuous	ratio	1
Gender		sex	1 = male 0 = female	nominal/categorical	1
Onset of visual impairment		onset	1 = congenital 0 = acquired	nominal/categorical	1
The severity of visual impairment		sever	1 = mild 2 = severe 3 = blindness	ordinal	1
Marital status		marry	1 = single 2 = married 3 = divorced 4 = widowed	nominal/categorical	1
Socioeconomic status		soc	1 = lower class 2 = lower-middle class 3 = middle class 4 = upper-middle class 5 = upper class	ordinal	1
Living setting		liv	1 = urban 2 = suburban 3 = rural	nominal/categorical	1
Highest educational attainment		ed	1 = primary 2 = secondary 3 = graduate 4 = post-graduate	ordinal	1

Employment barrier	The Barrier to Employment Scales (BES)	bes	One = Not at all a barrier 2 = 3 = 4 = 5 = a very severe barrier	interval	26
Employment support	The Employment Support Scales (SES)	see	1 = Not at all 2 = 3 = 4 = 5 = To a great extent	interval	19
Employment outcomes	The Employment Outcomes Survey (EOS)	eos	One = strongly disagree 2 = 3 = 4 = Five = strongly agree	interval	17
Functional ability	The Functional Ability of Visually Impaired Questionnaires (FAQ)	faq	0 = no difficulty 1 = 2 = 3 = 4 = extreme difficulty	interval	20
Perceived stigma	The Perceived Stigma Scale for People with Visual Impairment (PSS-VI)	pss	One = strongly disagree 2 = 3 = 4 = Five = strongly agree	interval	10

Transportation obstacles	Transportation Scale for People with Visual Impairment Related to Employment (TSVIRE)	tv	One = strongly disagree 2 = 3 = 4 = Five = strongly agree	interval	5

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES IN BENGALI

শিরোনাম: বাংলাদেশে দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের জন্য কর্মসংস্থানের বাধা, সহায়তা এবং ফলাফল অনুসন্ধান

জনসংখ্যা সংক্রান্ত প্রশ্নাবলীঃ

১। আপনার বয়স কত? _____ ২। আপনার লিঙ্গ কি? _____ পুরুষ_____ মহিলা

৩। দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার সূত্রপাত: ___ জন্মগত (অর্থাৎ, জন্মের সময়) ___ অর্জিত

৪। দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার তীব্রতাঃ___ হালকা দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতা___ গুরুতর দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতা___অন্ধত্ব

৫। আপনার বৈবাহিক অবস্থা কি? _____ অবিবাহিত, _____ বিবাহিত, _____ তালাকপ্রাপ্ত, _____ বিধবা

৬। আপনার আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থা কি? _____ নিম্নবিত্ত, _____ নিম্ন মধ্যবিত্ত, _____ মধ্যবিত্ত, _____ উচ্চ মধ্যবিত্ত, _____ উচ্চবিত্ত

৭। নিচের কোনটি আপনার একাডেমিক সেটিং প্রতিনিধিত্ব করে? _____ শহুরে, _____ শহরতলির, _____ গ্রামীণ

৮।ব্যক্তির শিক্ষার স্তরঃ ১। প্রাথমিক ২। মাধ্যমিক ৩। স্নাতক ৪। স্নাতকোত্তর

কর্মসংস্থানে বাধা স্কেল ঃ কোন বাধা নেই = ১, সামান্য বাধা = ২, মতামত নেই = ৩, মোটামুটি বাধা = ৪, অনেক বাধা= ৫

	১	২	৩	৪	৫
চাকরির ইন্টারভিউ বা কাজের জন্য পরিবহনের অভাব					
শিশু যত্ন বা নির্ভরযোগ্য শিশু যত্ন ব্যবস্থার অভাব					
সাশ্রয়ী মূল্যের আবাসন খুঁজে পেতে অসুবিধা					
প্রয়োজনীয় নথি পেতে অসুবিধা, যেমন আইডি					
শিক্ষা বা প্রশিক্ষণের সুযোগে সীমিত প্রবেশাধিকার					
ইংরেজি বা অন্যান্য ভাষায় যোগাযোগ করতে অসুবিধা					
স্বাস্থ্যসেবা এবং মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য পরিষেবা গ্রহনে অসুবিধা					
অপরাধের ইতিহাস বা ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ড চেক					
জাতি, লিঙ্গ, বয়স বা অন্যান্য কারণে বৈষম্যের শিকার					
প্রযুক্তি বা ইন্টারনেটে সীমিত সুযোগ					
একটি নতুন কাজের পরিবেশে মানিয়ে নিতে সমস্যা					
কাজের প্রয়োজনীয়তা বা যোগ্যতা সম্পর্কে সীমিত বোঝা					

সীমিত চাকরি খোঁজার দক্ষতা বা অভিজ্ঞতা					
স্ট্রেস বা মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য সমস্যা মোকাবেলা করতে অসুবিধা					
ক্রেডিট বা আর্থিক সম্পদ সীমিত অ্যাক্সেস					
চাকরির আবেদন প্রক্রিয়ার সীমিত বোঝাপড়া					
কর্মসংস্থান আইন এবং অধিকার সীমিত বোঝার					
একটি নির্দিষ্ট ক্ষেত্র বা অবস্থানে সীমিত চাকরির সুযোগ					
সীমিত নেটওয়ার্কিং বা পেশাদার সংযোগ					
সীমিত শারীরিক বা মানসিক ক্ষমতা					
সীমিত শিক্ষা বা কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা					
পরিবার বা বন্ধুদের কাছ থেকে সমর্থনের অভাব					
একটি স্থিতিশীল কাজের ইতিহাস বজায় রাখতে অসুবিধা					
আর্থিক বা বাজেট পরিচালনা করতে অসুবিধা					
পূর্ববর্তী নিয়োগকর্তার কাছ থেকে প্রতিশোধ বা বৈষম্যের ভয়					
চাকরি অনুসন্ধান সংস্থান এবং সরঞ্জামগুলির সীমিত জ্ঞান।					

<u>কর্মসংস্থান সমর্থন স্কেলঃ</u> একদম নেই = ১, সামান্য নেই =২, নিরপেক্ষ= ৩, সামান্য আছে=৪, অনেক আছে= ৫

কাজের সন্ধানে সহায়তা					
জীবনবৃত্তান্ত এবং কভার লেটার উন্নয়ন					
ইন্টারভিউ দক্ষতা প্রশিক্ষণ					
চাকরির নিয়োগ পরিষেবা					
কাজের প্রশিক্ষণ					
ক্যারিয়ার কাউন্সেলিং এবং অন্বেষণ					
কর্মক্ষেত্রে থাকার ব্যবস্থা এবং পরিবর্তন					
চাকরি ধরে রাখার সমর্থন					
পরিবহন এবং শিশু যত্নে সহায়তা					
সুবিধা কাউন্সেলিং এবং সহায়তা					
চাকরি ধরে রাখা এবং অগ্রগতি সহ সহায়তা					
চাকরির প্রশিক্ষণ প্রোগ্রাম এবং সংস্থানগুলির সহায়তা					
ভাষা এবং সাংস্কৃতিক বাধাগুলির সাথে সহায়তা					
অপরাধমূলক রেকর্ড এবং ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ড চেক সহ সহায়তা					

বেকারত্ব বা কারাবাসের পর কর্মশক্তিতে পুনঃপ্রবেশকারী ব্যক্তিদের জন্য সমর্থন					
কর্মসংস্থান ব্যয়ের জন্য আর্থিক ব্যবস্থাপনা এবং বাজেটের সাথে সহায়তা					

কর্মসংস্থান ফলাফল সমীক্ষা: নেই = ১, সামান্য = ২, মতামত নেই = ৩, মোটামুটি = ৪, অনেক **আছে** = ৫

1. বর্তমান কর্মসংস্থানের অবস্থা

2. বর্তমান কর্মসংস্থানের শিল্প
3. বর্তমান কর্মসংস্থানের পেশা
4. নিয়োগকর্তার প্রকার
5. বর্তমান কর্মসংস্থানের ফুল-টাইম/পার্টটাইম
6. বর্তমান কর্মসংস্থানের বেতন বা মজুরি
7. বর্তমান নিয়োগকর্তার দ্বারা প্রদত্ত সুবিধাগুলি
8. কাজের সন্তুষ্টি
9. বর্তমান অবস্থানে সময়ের দৈর্ঘ্য
10. ব্যক্তি কীভাবে তাদের বর্তমান চাকরি খুঁজে পেয়েছে
11. চাকরিটি ব্যক্তির অধ্যয়নের সাথে সম্পর্কিত কিনা
12. ব্যক্তি শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের দ্বারা প্রদত্ত কোন কর্মজীবন পরিষেবা ব্যবহার করেছে কিনা
13. ব্যক্তি অন্যদের কাছে তাদের শিক্ষামূলক প্রোগ্রামের সুপারিশ করবে কিনা
14. ব্যক্তির শিক্ষার স্তর
15. ব্যক্তির বয়স
16. ব্যক্তির লিঙ্গ
17. ব্যক্তির জাতি

দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধীদের কার্যকরী ক্ষমতা প্রশ্নাবলী স্কেলঃ **একদম নেই = 0, সামান্য নেই = ১, নিরপেক্ষ= ২, সামান্য আছে= ৩, অনেক আছে= ৪**

গতিশীলতা এবং অভিযোজন				
ব্যক্তিগত যত্ন এবং স্বাস্থ্যবিধি				

খাবার তৈরি এবং খাওয়ানো				
হাউসকিপিং এবং বাড়ির রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ				
যোগাযোগ এবং সামাজিক মিথস্ক্রিয়া				
সহায়ক ডিভাইস ব্যবহার				
পড়া এবং লেখা				
অর্থ ব্যবস্থাপনা				
অবসর এবং বিনোদনমূলক কার্যক্রম				
পাবলিক ট্রান্সপোর্ট ব্যবহার				
কেনাকাটা				
প্রযুক্তির ব্যবহার				
নিরাপত্তা এবং জরুরী পদ্ধতি				
স্বাস্থ্য রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ এবং স্ব-যত্ন				
কর্মসংস্থান বা বৃত্তিমূলক কার্যক্রম				
শিশু যত্ন এবং অভিভাবকত্ব				
সম্প্রদায়ের কার্যক্রমে অংশগ্রহণ				
ধর্মীয় বা আধ্যাত্মিক অনুশীলন				
যৌন কার্যকলাপ				
ওষুধ এবং স্বাস্থ্যসেবা নিয়োগের ব্যবস্থাপনা।				

দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের জন্য অনুভূত স্টিগমা স্কেলঃ **একদম নেই** = **১, সামান্য নেই** =**২, নিরপেক্ষ**= **৩, সামান্য আছে**=**৪, অনেক আছে**= **৫**

আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার কারণে লোকেরা আমার সাথে অন্যরকম আচরণ করে।					
আমি যখন জনসমক্ষে সহায়ক ডিভাইস ব্যবহার করি তখন আমি বিব্রত বোধ করি।					
আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার কারণে আমি সামাজিক কার্যকলাপ থেকে বাদ পড়েছি।					
আমি মনে করি লোকেরা মনে করে যে আমি আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার কারণে কিছু কিছু করতে পারি না।					
আমি চিন্তা করি যে আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতা আমাকে অন্যদের কাছে কম আকর্ষণীয় করে তোলে।					
আমি মনে করি আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতা অন্যদের জন্য একটি বোঝা।					

আমি প্রায়ই অনুভব করি যে আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার কারণে আমাকে নিজেকে আরও প্রমাণ করতে হবে।					
আমি মনে করি আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার কারণে আমাকে সফল হতে আরও কঠোর পরিশ্রম করতে হবে।					
আমি মনে করি যে আমার দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধকতার কারণে লোকেরা আমাকে ততটা গুরুত্ব সহকারে নেয় না।					

কর্মসংস্থান সম্পর্কিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের জন্য পরিবহন স্কেলঃ **একদম নেই** = **১, সামান্য নেই** =**২, নিরপেক্ষ**= **৩, সামান্য আছে**=**৪, অনেক আছে**= **৫**

পাবলিক ট্রান্সপোর্ট ব্যবহার করে আপনার কর্মস্থলে যাওয়া আপনার পক্ষে কতটা কঠিন?					
আপনার বাড়ি থেকে বাস/ট্রেন স্টেশন খুঁজে পাওয়া আপনার পক্ষে কতটা কঠিন?					
আপনার কর্মস্থল থেকে বাস/ট্রেন স্টেশন খুঁজে পাওয়া আপনার পক্ষে কতটা কঠিন?					
সময়সূচী বা রুট সম্পর্কে তথ্যের অভাবে আপনি কতবার বাস/ট্রেন মিস করেছেন?					
আপনি কতবার একটি বাস/ট্রেন মিস করেছেন কারণ আপনি এটি দেখতে পাচ্ছেন না?					

APPENDIX J

APPENDIX J

INFORMED CONSENT

Title: Investigating Employment Barriers, Supports, and Outcomes for Individuals with Visual Impairments in Bangladesh.

Principal Investigator: Md Mozadded Hossen
Dissertation Chair: Roy Chen, Ph.D.

Background: I am conducting a research study for my dissertation to understand employment outcomes for people with visual impairment in Bangladesh. I am particularly interested in understanding the perspectives of employment prospects regardless of barriers and employment supports.

Procedure: There are two qualifications to participate in this study: (1) you must be 18 years or older; (2) have a visual impairment. Participating in this study will help us learn how people with visual impairment face challenges in the job market. You will participate in this study if you have visual impairments at some moment in your life and have been trying to get or are already in the job market. You will participate in a 20–30-minute survey questionnaire. The interview will take place face-to-face. The researcher will ask questions in the first interview to get your demographic information. We will not ask for identifying information such as your name, date of birth, National ID, etc. In addition, we will ask about how employment barriers are holding you back from obtaining employment. Your opinion concerning your mental health and well-being, and your experiences and needs concerning your health and well-being. The interview will be conducted with pen and paper.

Risks or Possible Discomforts Associated with the Study*:* No anticipated risks are associated with your participation in this study. A potential risk is feeling uncomfortable or distressed from remembering and sharing difficulties about your employment experiences. You may find answers to some of the questions upsetting, but we expect this will be like what you discuss with family or friends. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer and end the survey at any time. If you feel distressed, we can take a break during the interview.

Benefits of Participation: You may benefit from this study by having a chance to talk about your experiences in the job market. A significant advantage of this study is its contribution to society.

The findings of this study may inform rehabilitation-related clinical practice, policy, and further research.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary; you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If, for any reason, you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation, tell the researcher that you wish to stop.

Publication and Confidentiality: The researchers will keep any identifying materials saved on a password-protected computer. The researchers will not release this raw data to anyone else. The collected survey materials will be destroyed after three years.

Whom to Contact for Research-Related Questions: For questions about the research itself or to report any adverse effects during or following participation, contact the researcher, Md Mozadded Hossen, at mdmozadded.hossen01@utrgv.edu and Dr. Roy Chen (Dissertation Chair) at 956-665-7036 roy.chen@utrgv.edu.

Whom to Contact Regarding Your Rights as a Participant: The Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB) has reviewed and approved this research. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or feel that the researcher did not adequately meet your rights as a participant, please get in touch with the IRB at (956) 665-2093 or irb@utrgv.edu.

VITA

Md Mozadded Hossen is a Ph.D. candidate and graduating in May 2024 from the Rehabilitation Counseling program at the University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley. He earned an M.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Lamar University. He has held various academic positions, including teaching assistant, research assistant, graduate adviser, counseling supervisor intern, proctor for the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination, and peer mentor. He has also worked as a case manager for the Qatar-Harvey Scholarship Program at Lamar University.

Hossen's diverse background includes college education, mental health therapy, disaster management, psychosocial rehabilitation, addiction counseling, and more. He has published several articles on disability, stigma, social justice, employment, and attitudes towards people with disabilities. Hossen has presented his works at various conferences and organizations, including the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine 100th Annual Conference, the 28th & 29th Annual National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns Conference, 2023 National Rehabilitation Counseling Association Conference, and the National Council on Rehabilitation Education Spring 2022 Conference.

Hossen has received several awards and scholarships and has served as President of the Muslim Students' Association and NRCA (student chapter) in UTRGV, Texas, and as a Senator for Graduate College at UTRGV. Hossen will be available to respond to any questions or concerns through mozadded1982@gmail.com.