PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND IMPOVERISHMENT AMONG WOMEN IN
BUJUMBURA CITY, BURUNDI

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ABSTRACT
This study was undertaken to assess how physical disability impoverished women in Bujumbura city. The study objectives were to identify the forms of physical disability among women in Bujumbura; to analyze the state of impoverishment among women with physical disability in Bujumbura; and to examine how physical disability impoverishes women in Bujumbura city. The study employed a mixed methods design in which both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. A survey of 100 women with physical disability, 8 key informant interviews and 4 focus group discussions with men and women were conducted. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study findings revealed that there are several forms of physical disability among women in Bujumbura city. These included women who were having the mobility impairment (46%), hearing impairments (25%), visual impairments (17%) and those with walking impairments (12%). The study further established that most of the women with physical disability in Bujumbura were impoverished. For example 25 percent of physically disabled women did not have adequate access to health services. 25 percent had poor housing, 17 percent had few income sources, 17 percent were not employed, and 13 percent did not have adequate food and 3 percent had other difficulties. These have limited women with disabilities access to the necessities of life. The findings further reveal that 60 percent of the respondents who were physically disabled were impoverished. It was established that due to these disabilities, women were discriminated, unemployed and had limited income which also limited their access to health services, food and housing. It was also established that women with physical disabilities' accessibility to social amenities was limited in scope and has worsened poverty among them. The study concludes that physical disabilities in the form of mobility among others are common in Bujumbura city. This study has also shown that women with disability are impoverished by their own status and conditions. This can be though limited access to health services, food and income generating activities. The study recommends that health services should be improved through for example providing health equipments for visual and hearing impairment as means of supporting WWFD. There is also need for subsidization of the services given to women with physical disabilities such as housing provision of free health services, educational services and that can improve income generation and reduce the prevailing impoverishment among women with disability.