

**IMPLICATIONS OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (VI) ON PERFORMANCE OF
GENDER ROLES AMONG KIPSIGIS WOMEN IN THE FAMILY IN
KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is entirely original with no submissions to other universities for credit toward a degree.

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DEDICATION

I am profoundly thankful to Almighty God for the opportunity to undertake this academic journey. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Pacificah Okemwa and Dr. Sheila Mutuma, for their invaluable mentorship and constant support. Lastly, I dedicate this work to my cherished wife, Linet Kwamboka, whose encouragement and editorial guidance have been essential to its completion.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDC:	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
FGDs:	Focus Group Discussions
IAPB:	International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
KUB:	Kenya Union of the Blind
MOH:	Ministry of Health
NACOSTI:	National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences.
VI:	Visually Impaired
WHO:	World Health Organization.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Femininity	Set of attributes, behaviors, and roles culturally associated with girls and women such as performance of household chores in the Kipsigis community.
Gender	Socially constructed attributes, characteristics and behavior ascribed to men/boys and women/girls in specific contexts. Among the Kipsigis, these include norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men.
Masculinity	A set of attributes, behaviors and roles culturally associated with boys and men in the Kipsigis community.
Power Relations	Relationships based on power where a particular gender is inferior to the other.
Socialization	An ongoing process by which a person develops a sense of self and learns the customs, principles, conduct, and social skills relevant to their social standing.
Visual Disability	One with acuity of less than twenty meters

ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess how visual impairment affects the performance of gender roles among Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub County in Kericho County. Among the Kipsigis, there are gender roles performed by men and women. Attributable to patriarchy and other socially constructed aspects, it is women who end up performing most of these gender roles in families. The research objectives were – to establish the gender roles assigned to Kipsigis women; to find out how visually impaired women cope in performance of their gender roles; to examine the challenges faced by visually impaired Kipsigis women in the performance of gender roles; and to investigate the possible strategies that can be adopted to mitigate the challenges faced by visually impaired women in performing their gender roles. The research was conducted in Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County. Households with visually handicapped women were the target. The investigation was guided by the social model of disability. The study employed a descriptive research methodology, and 166 participants were selected using a simple random selection procedure. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to gather data, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) was used for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used, and they were displayed as frequencies and percentages. Tables, charts, graphs, and summaries were used to display the data. Results showed that as a result of visual impairment, Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub County encounter challenges in mobility, identification and location of items and determination of quality. Challenges are also evident in meal preparation and cooking. Similarly, results showed that dependence on family and friends has seen visually impaired women cope with challenges, thereby perform their gender roles. It is recommended that family members motivate the visually impaired to perform their tasks. In cases of poor performance, family members should feel free to correct them. For businesses, it will be vital for them to provide necessary assistance to the visually impaired. For county and national governments, it is recommended that they create awareness to minimize stigma on disability. It is also recommended that the visually impaired are involved in decision making before implementation of programs and projects targeting them.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

There are multiple sections covered in this chapter. The problem and the foundation for the research are the main topics of the study's backdrop. Additionally, there is the problem statement that highlights the knowledge gap on the topic. The research questions and objectives come next, along with assumptions that draw attention to aspects of the topic that the researcher may have taken for granted. The research outlines the advantages of the current study's findings in the rationale and relevance part. The chapter ends with a summary of the study's limitations, scope, and delimitations.

1.1 Background to the Study

In every society, there are different expectations among individuals and groups which are critical in defining gender roles. In many societies, these gender roles are based on beliefs and values about gender, as well as sex. Essentially, it is the society which ascribes these gender roles in terms of attitudes, behaviors and actions which are seen as appropriate or inappropriate to any of the genders in line with cultural norms and traditions (Ajala, 2016). As individuals interact with their environments on a day-to-day basis, gender roles emerge. It is through these gender roles that individuals know the kind of behavior suitable for what sex in society. This has been highlighted by Lindsey (2015) who notes that gender roles are based on the sexuality of an individual. Consequently, the definition of appropriate gender roles is the basis of beliefs about differences between the sexes within families. From this, therefore, it is

clear that gender roles are those which men and women play as per the expectations of society based on their sex.

Looking at it from a traditional perspective, it was believed in many societies that it is the role of women to look after (nurture) the family rather than men. This, according to Sekścińska, Trzcińska, & Maison (2016), meant that women mainly played the role of housewives while men were responsible for work and maintenance of the family as a unit. This implies that as homemakers, women were critical in playing a number of gender roles in society. Thus, any form of disability may affect the effectiveness of any gender to perform their roles (Yu & Choe, 2021). This is because disabilities, whether mental, physical, intellectual, or sensory, serve as obstacles to a person's ability to fully engage in gender roles in society (Yu & Choe, 2021).

As of 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 2.2 billion people globally experience near or distant vision impairment. The WHO identifies several causes of vision impairment and blindness, including cataracts, glaucoma, corneal opacity, and uncorrected refractive errors (World Health Organization, 2021). The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) notes that women and girls account for 55% of those with visual impairments. Moreover, it is believed that women face an 8% higher risk of blindness compared to men. In the UK, which is one of the developed countries, nearly two-thirds of the nearly 2 million individuals with vision loss are women (Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke, 2019). Globally, the high cases of vision impairment among women are attributable to the fact that they are at a greater risk of certain eye conditions such as cataracts especially in low, as well as middle-income countries. Many of these women in these

countries experience challenges when it comes to accessing eye health services, especially relating to existing socio-economic and cultural factors which increase costs, a lack of access to information and resources, and an inability to travel (International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, 2022). As a result, although both men and women face obstacles when trying to receive eye health care, women face these obstacles more frequently than men. This has been a major factor in the high prevalence of vision impairment in women. According to Courtright (2009), visually challenged women and girls face a disadvantage when it comes to fulfilling gender roles. It is, therefore, important to establish how they cope in the performance of these roles in the family.

In the African context, it is estimated that around 26.3 million suffer from a form of visual impairment (WHO Regional Office for Africa, 2021). Using the case of South Africa, Addo, Akuffo, Sewpaul, Dukhi, Agyei-Manu, Asare, & Reddy, (2021) found that vision impairment was more prevalent especially among females, at 55.6% of a sample size of 4346. This indicates that vision impairment mostly affects women. Visually impaired women may face additional challenges in the performance of gender roles at home. For example, when it comes to performance of gender roles such as caregiving and household chores, it is challenging for the visually impaired women. This is because they lack sight necessary for the performance of such roles. Challenges also arise due to lack of flexibility. According to Bonaccio, Connelly, Gellatly, Jetha, & Ginis (2020), any form of disability may require flexible work arrangements to assist one if they are facing transportation barriers while performing their roles. In the case of women with visual impairment, it implies that a lack of flexibility in the work arrangements may negatively impact the performance of their

roles. This is especially true in cases where such gender roles require moving from one place to another. In another study by Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019), it was found that visual impairment affected the performance of gender roles at home negatively by making it difficult to shop, prepare and cook meals. The authors suggest that the effect was mainly more pronounced in cases where the level of visual impairment is severe.

Although Kenya is the most industrially developed country in East Africa, approximately 40% of the population continues to live in poverty (Nyawira, 2021). Visually impaired women living in poverty are highly affected due to their roles as primary household service providers and caregivers. Scholars argue that due to their limited movement, they often need accompaniment to do their daily duties leading to a high cost of living in terms of their expenses on paying the help becomes costly (Kabia, Mbau, Muraya, Morgan, Molyneux, & Barasa, 2018). Accordingly, a study conducted in Trans Nzoia County by MMed, Macleod, Bastawrous, Wanjala, Gichangi, and Burton (2019) discovered that a lot of women are afraid of medical professionals who provide eye care services. Because they do not know exactly what these professionals will say when administering care to them, they avoid them. Traveling to new cities where services are available is another source of anxiety (Rono, Bastawrous, Macleod, Wanjala, Gichuhi, & Burton, 2019). The lack of accessible and accessible transit from rural to urban areas can make that unfamiliarity appears much worse.

The Kipsigis community is an agro-pastoral and patrilineal society (Chelimo & Chelelgo, 2016). The authors note that this community belongs to the Kalenjin-

speaking cluster. In precolonial and early colonial Kipsigis society, gender served as the fundamental premise that framed production relations (von Bülow, 1992). Women's standing in the house-property complex and their role in production gave them a great deal of autonomy and flexibility, yet men had the last say over the most valuable types of productive resources, such as land and animals. The major role of Kipsigis women was to feed their families and had the potential power over food control over their husbands. Kipsigis women were also traders in foodstuffs which had an influence on economic and political matters (Mulder, 1987; Korir, 2018). In the Kipsigis village, women also prepared food, gathered firewood and water, tended gardens, grew sorghum and millet, and looked after families (National Museums of Kenya, 2023).

In performing daily tasks (gender roles), women (whether visually impaired or not) from the same neighborhood helped each other. This was possible through the use of well-developed network, ensuring they worked together in rotating labor groups known as *Morik* (von Bülow, 1992). It is expected that for a woman (whether visually impaired or not) in the contemporary Kipsigis community to be 'complete' and respected, they had to perform those roles (National Museums of Kenya, 2023). As such, it is still the case to date. For those with visual impairments, it is a complicated situation when it comes to the performance of their gender roles in society (National Museums of Kenya, 2023). This research, therefore, aimed at assessing the implications of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles in the family among Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub County. The Sub County has Kenya Union of the Blind offices catering to the needs of the visually impaired in the county. Due to cultural beliefs and traditional gender roles, visually impaired women in this area

have suffered discrimination. As a result, it was necessary to investigate the implications of visual impairment on gender roles in the area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In many African societies, culturally ascribed gender roles define women's responsibilities within the family. These roles such as childcare, caregiving for family members, and contributing to general family wellbeing amongst other responsibilities are traditionally expected of all women regardless of their physical abilities. These roles are largely physical and service-oriented yet, visually impaired women often receive minimal support. However, visual impairment (VI), presents unique challenges that may affect women's capacity to perform these roles effectively. Despite these challenges, societal expectations remain unchanged. The presence of visual impairment therefore may significantly hinder performance and increase vulnerability.

This study therefore seeks to examine the implications of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles among Kipsigis women in the family setting in Kericho County. It aims to highlight the challenges, coping mechanisms, and social support structures that shape their everyday experiences, thereby generating knowledge that can inform gender-responsive and disability-inclusive interventions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research was guided by both general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The major objective of this research is to explore the implications of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles in the family among Kipsigis women.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the gender roles assigned to visually impaired women in Ainamoi Sub-County
- ii. To determine how visually impaired women cope in performing their gender roles in Ainamoi Sub-County.
- iii. To examine the challenges faced by visually impaired Kipsigis women in the performance of gender roles in Ainamoi Sub-County.
- iv. To suggest the possible strategies that can be adopted to mitigate the challenges faced by visually impaired women in performing their gender roles.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the gender roles assigned to Visually impaired women in Ainamoi Sub-County?
- ii. How do visually impaired Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub-County perform their gender roles?
- iii. What challenges do visually impaired Kipsigis women face while performing their gender roles in this Sub-County?
- iv. What are the possible mechanisms that can be adopted to mitigate the challenges faced by visually impaired women in performing their gender roles?

1.5 Justification and Significance

The struggle for equality and human rights presents numerous challenges for individuals who are visually impaired. While both men and women with disabilities encounter discrimination because of their condition, women with disabilities experience even greater disadvantages due to the intersection of gender and disability discrimination (MMed et al., 2019). Furthermore, disability studies have historically examined the lives of individuals with impairments using a gender-blind approach, failing to consider the effects of gender on the lives of both men and women with disabilities. Women with disabilities face both gender and disability discrimination, which has not yet been acknowledged by the disability community. The field's policies and procedures have not been developed to specifically address the requirements of women with disabilities. In a similar vein, they don't fully address every aspect of impairment.

This study was crucial because, according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 5 and the third principle of Vision 2030, gender equality is a prerequisite for effective development. The promotion and protection of PWDs' rights is also emphasized in article 2 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa, which was adopted in January 2018 and went into effect in June 2020 (The African Union Commission, 2024). This is to ensure that they enjoy all their rights, and their inherent dignity is respected. As such, assessing the barriers that impede the performance of gender roles by visually impaired women as PWDs and proposing possible solutions will go a long way in reducing the prevailing inequalities among women particularly those with disabilities. The study's findings are intended to aid in the precise

estimation of the burden of blindness and visual impairment on families. Numerous well-known organizations, including government departments, universities, and organizations tasked with addressing gender issues, may also use this study to inform their interventions and policymakers' creation of suitable legislation to close the gap. Scholars will also find the paper helpful in their future research on this topic. The study will improve scholars' understanding of the topic. This might be included in a review of the literature for further study.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The research was done in Ainamoi Sub County of Kericho County. Ainamoi Sub County has been chosen as it is one of the areas in rural Kenya that has a high number of visually impaired persons. The Sub County also has Kenya Union of the Blind offices catering to the needs of the visually impaired in the county. The area experiences various categories of visual impairment – mild, moderate, severe and blindness, who are members of the organization. It targeted households with individuals whose visual impairment is at the severe and blindness levels. These were women with visual loss.

In many cultures, blindness and other forms of visual impairment are used by other people to discriminate against other members of society. As a result, some were not willing to share information freely for fear of divulging too much personal information. In cases where the participants were not able to fill in the questionnaires attributable to their visual impairment, the researcher sought the services of a caretaker or parent. The study covers information from 2003 when the Persons with

Disabilities Act was passed to 2022 when the 2010 Constitution was 10 years since promulgation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The chapter aims to review the pertinent literature and contains several subsections. It introduces the theoretical framework of the study. In alignment with the objectives, the empirical review is organized into four thematic categories. Lastly, a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between the study's variables is provided in diagrammatic form, accompanied by a summary of the literature and identification of existing gaps.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

2.2.1 The Concept of Disability and Gender Roles in Society

As a concept, disability can be defined on the basis of three models. From the individual model, Pinilla-Roncancio (2015) argues that disability is viewed as an individual problem which is some kind of impairment that limits their ability to participate in societal activity. As a consequence, such a person may fail to fulfill social standards as they may not work or be actively engaged as abled persons in society. According to Banks, Kuper, and Polack (2017), there are several different kinds of disabilities, including mental disorders, physical impairments, intellectual/cognitive impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and combined impairments. However, according to the social model, society has a role in the development of disability since it views disability as socially produced. According to the paradigm, a number of social barriers prevent people with disabilities from engaging in everyday activities. From a social standpoint, it suggests that in order to enable those with disabilities to fully participate in society's activities, social

adjustments are required. The World Health Organization (WHO) also developed the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework, sometimes referred to as the biopsychosocial model. According to this approach, current psychosocial and lifestyle factors, as well as the interplay between preexisting social obstacles and a health condition, all contribute to disability in addition to impairments (Pinilla-Roncancio, 2015). The social model of disability was applied in this study.

Gender roles essentially refer to how people in a society are expected to dress, act, groom, speak, or conduct themselves on the basis of their sex (Eisend, 2019). Thus, every society has its expectations as far as men and women are expected to behave, dress or general presentation. For instance, as a result of these roles, girls and women are expected to be feminine in the ways they dress, remain polite and accommodative and nurture others. This is unlike men who are expected to remain strong and aggressive in their approach to things in society. What is of importance, according to Lee, Hu, & Li (2020), is that by nature, gender roles are personal and cultural. Thus, while they are played at a personal level, they determine how individuals interact in the larger society. These expectations (gender roles) also vary between society, culture or ethnic groups and keep changing over time. According to Morgenroth & Ryan (2021), non-performance of gender roles has consequences in what is referred to as gender trouble. Here, victims face threats at a personal level, group level or in terms of identity. For example, if a family is set up, a victim may be punished by society as many communities may look at the inability to perform gender roles as a form of disobedience. For this research, gender roles were viewed from the

perspective of what visually impaired women within the Kipsigis community are expected to do in their daily activities.

2.2.2 Assigning Gender Roles and Visual Impairment Among Women

In any society, gender roles may be assigned based on various aspects. This is evident in cultural settings where in many societies, boys are encouraged to grow into strong, aggressive, dominant and achieving men. On the other hand, girls are assigned roles that require qualities such as passiveness, emotions and everything concerning the care of a family or home (Ljunge, 2016). Although these are general roles assigned to women, they may vary from one culture to another. Using the case of Tanzania, Palermo, Chzhen, Balvin, & Kajula (2020) found that in cultural settings where norms prioritize roles of women as caregivers, they may be an impediment to such women accessing educational, as well as career opportunities. As a consequence, such a culture may condition women to perform roles relating to caregiving and domestic responsibilities. On the basis of the above line of thinking, it is imperative to acknowledge that there is a gap as existing studies have not mentioned if culture talks about visual impairment as a disability among women and its role in determining gender roles. The current research sought to fill this gap.

Gender roles can also be determined from a social perspective. In this case, the socialization process ensures that people learn about what is acceptable and unacceptable in society. This process starts at the basic unit which is the family. The way children are treated in the family socializes them on the type of gender roles they are likely to play when they grow into adults. For example, in infancy, girls are held gently and tenderly. As they grow up, girls are nurtured to show emotions and express

themselves freely. Essentially, socialization ensures gender roles are rooted in childhood and reinforced as women grow through adolescence. It is this exposure to certain roles and experiences of doing the same that shapes their attitudes towards the same. Thébaud, Kornrich, & Ruppner (2021) point out that through socialization, women internalize certain expectations which later become roles assigned to them in adulthood. From this, there is a gap in that existing studies fail to mention if visual impairment as a disability affects the assignment of gender roles in society. Consequently, the current research sought to fill this gap by looking at the implications of disability in the assignment of gender roles among Kipsigis women in Kericho County.

It can be noted that any form of impairment negatively affects how women perform their gender roles (Coleman-Fountain & McLaughlin, 2013). For visually impaired women, the performance of various gender roles becomes a challenge. This was evident in a study by Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019) which found that visual impairment affects the ability of one to perform their roles effectively. Such roles include shopping, preparation for meals and cooking, and washing among others. As a result of visual impairment, for instance, the performance of gender roles by women is affected as they encounter limitations in terms of mobility, environmental interactions, and social interactions. Using the case of visually impaired Kipsigis women from Ainamoi Sub-County in Kericho County, the study sought to determine how their performance of gender roles has been affected as a result of their disability.

2.2.3 How Visually Impaired Women Cope in Performing Gender Roles

As a result of visual impairment, performance of gender roles especially among women is greatly hampered (Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke, 2019). Nonetheless, so as not to be seen to deviate from societal norms especially being seen as lazy in society, these visually impaired women have to find a way to navigate through these gender roles. At times, they could be the only persons to engage in those roles especially if unmarried or with no one to offer any form of assistance. To cope in the performance of gender roles on a daily basis, visually impaired women have to develop a high level of dependence. This is attributed to the fact that for one to function properly in modern society, these gender roles are instrumental. In a study by Zebardast, Swenor, Landingham, Massof, Munoz, West, & Ramulu, (2015), it was concluded that when it comes to the performance of various gender roles in a family, the only way to cope is by depending on others for assistance. Through the dependence, visually impaired women are in a position to move around as they go about the performance of their gender roles. The implication of this is there are challenges that visual impairment imposes on those living independently. The aspect of dependence on others especially for the visually impaired has also been cited by Stevelink, Malcolm, & Fear (2015). Through this dependence, Stevelink, Malcolm, & Fear (2015) point out that visually impaired persons are better positioned to perform their gender roles as part of their daily lives. Given that previous research on the effect of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles has simply focused on both men and women, there are gaps in that no one gender has been fully explored. To fill this gap, the current research used the case of visually impaired women from Ainamoi Sub-County in Kericho County to determine how they cope with challenges in performing gender roles given their disability.

2.2.4 Challenges Faced by Visually Impaired Women in Performing their Roles

Looking at the study area, there are various physical barriers in terms of the infrastructure that pose challenges to the VI as they go about the performance of gender roles. One such barrier is the poor road network in Kericho County. A report by the County Government of Kericho (2023) acknowledges that the County has a poor state of physical infrastructure. Given that the area is expansive, there are inadequate funds set aside to meet the road maintenance needs for the County which keep increasing. Another challenge that has compounded the issue of poor road network is obsolete construction equipment is ineffective and inefficient in as far as road maintenance in the County is concerned (County Government of Kericho, 2023). As a consequence, the County continues to face challenges of poor infrastructure, thereby negatively impacting on performance of gender roles among the visually impaired.

As they go about their gender roles, visually impaired women face numerous challenges. This is attributed to the fact that these gender roles require vision to be performed effectively. Having a good vision is vital as it helps one perform gender roles to maintain balance, identify low-contrast hazards, estimate distances, and discern spatial relationships (Ahmed, Vafaei, Auais, Guralnik, & Zunzunegui, 2016). It is important to note that many of the gender roles in the family require mobility. As a result, visual impairment affects mobility especially in walking or going up/down steps in the performance of gender roles as the visually impaired have trouble. In a study by Brown, Goldstein, Chan, Massof, & Ramulu (2014) among visually impaired persons, it was found that there were functional complaints as visual impairment limits the ability to work effectively on gender roles. These are in terms

of challenges in performing in-home activities, mobility, facial recognition and interactions.

A study by Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019) found that as a result of visual impairment, daily activities such as shopping which are duties mainly performed by women are negatively impacted. This is especially one has to do their shopping in supermarkets, grocery stores, or busy market areas. In such cases, shopping independently becomes difficult. As a result, the study found that there is reliance on family, friends, carers, or neighbors to help in shopping for visually impaired women. For those shopping independently, they had to develop certain strategies. Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019) cite that memorization of a shopping routine is key among many visually impaired. For others, they called up shop attendants in advance to assist. Nonetheless, given that many shop attendants had no prior training in helping the visually impaired in shopping, the experience was still frustrating. To be sure of the quality, the visually impaired employed their senses of touch to feel the texture of items as they shopped (Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke, 2019).

In the case of the Salisbury Eye Evaluation Study by Swenor, Muñoz, & West (2013), it was found that visually impaired persons reported cases of difficulty in their mobility as they went about performing their gender roles. In a Japanese study by Miyata, Yoshikawa, Harano, Ueda, & Ogata (2021), it was established that there exists a significant association between visual impairment and difficulty in mobility in the performance of gender roles. A study by Crews, Chou, Stevens, & Saaddine (2016) in the United States concluded that especially for visually impaired persons above 65 years, difficulty in mobility in the performance of gender roles has increased

falls. Research by Steinman, Nguyen, Pynoos, & Leland (2011) found that falls are mainly associated with poor contrast sensitivity, visual field loss and reduced depth perception among the visually impaired. As a consequence of mobility challenges that may result in falls, the performance of gender roles among visually impaired persons is negatively impacted. Although the above studies cite mobility challenges as visually impaired persons in the performance of their gender roles, they failed to specifically look at the issue of mobility among visually impaired women. To fill this gap, the current research used the case of the visually impaired from the Kipsigis community from Ainamoi Sub-County, Kericho County.

Another challenge that visually impaired people face while performing their gender roles is mental health. Unlike persons with normal vision, Kempen, Ballemans, Ranchor, Rens, & Zijlstra (2012) note that visually impaired people are at a higher risk of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety as they go about performing their gender roles. This is attributed to distress resulting from the loss of vision. For visually impaired women, the mental health problems could be attributed to the societal stigma that they face. This is a double jeopardy for being women and visually impaired. In a study by Demmin & Silverstein (2020), it was concluded that visual impairment results in mental health problems as victims feel anxious, fearful, worried, frustrated, embarrassed and withdrawn socially. Among visually impaired women, Mahalakshmi & Velusamy (2018) note that as a result of mobility challenges, they face difficulties in accessing mental health professionals. Similarly, poor attitudes towards visual impairment among mental health professionals may imply that such women may be hesitant when it comes to seeking assistance, thereby

continuing to suffer mental health problems as they perform their gender roles in families.

As a functional disability, visual impairment was also said to increase anxiety and depression among 5,846 participants out of the 1,025,340 subjects. The study was carried out by Choi, Lee, & Lee (2018) between 2002 and 2013 with data coming from the Korean National Health Service. Results were similar to those in a study by van der Aa, Comijs, Penninx, van Rens, & van Nispen (2015) where mental health problems prevalent among visually impaired persons were varied. These included depressive disorder and anxiety disorders which were more prevalent among older adults with visual impairment. Given the mental health problems resulting from visual impairment, the performance of gender roles is affected negatively. From the above studies, it is clear that mental health is a challenge that visual impairment presents to visually impaired persons, thereby impacting the performance of gender roles negatively. What is evident is that most of the studies failed to specifically examine the case of visually impaired women.

The visually impaired women are also expected to perform duties like meal preparation and cooking like any other woman in the family. A study by Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019) concluded that attributable to visual impairment, meal preparation and cooking become difficult as a duty. For those visually impaired women who lived on their own, meal preparation and cooking challenges included a lack of confidence and safety. For example, given the lack of spatial awareness and depth perception, there are safety concerns when cutting. Similarly, there are challenges in boiling, hygiene on food items like vegetables, inability to determine

expiry dates, and undercooking or overcooking. To overcome such, the visually impaired used visual aids when cooking. An example is like magnifying glass to enable them to read what is displayed on devices such as microwaves. In other cases, there was memorization of the use of kitchen utensils and utilities. Despite this, however, Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019) acknowledge that support from family is critical. When such support is not available, the visually impaired choose to eat ready-made meals in restaurants or hotels.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 The Social Model of Disability

The study used the social model of disability to explain gender roles and try to conceptualize the theory in the study. In 1982, the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) put forth the approach. Oliver went on to elaborate on it in his 1983 publication, "Social Work with Disabled People" (Oliver, 1983). The idea of "disability" is socially produced, claims the social model of disability. According to the social model, "disability" results from interactions between individuals with disabilities and a setting that is full of social, communication, physical, and attitude barriers (Oliver, 1983) (see Figure 2.1 below).



Figure 2.1: The Social Model of Disability

Source: (Inclusion London, 2022)

It can be pointed out that the social model of disability states that for people with impairments to participate and enjoy life equally as those without, there must be a change in terms of the structural, environmental and attitudinal barriers within the environment (Pinilla-Roncancio, 2015). In this case, the model acknowledges that as a result of impairments, people's lives are impacted negatively by disabling barriers within the environment. Structural barriers are in terms of underlying norms, as well as ideologies in organizations and institutions which put judgement on what disability is. These barriers are sustained by those in leadership in various institutions and organizations. On the other hand, environmental barriers include physical barriers in the environment such as steps, pavements and a lack of resources to facilitate persons with disabilities. These, according to French & Swain (2011), may also refer to various ways of doing things which eventually exclude those with impairments. For instance, conducting meetings or allocating time for undertaking tasks without consideration of those with disabilities. Turning to attitudinal barriers, they are in terms of attitudes and behaviors that people show those with impairments. As a result,

Shakespeare (2011) looked at disability as a culturally and historically specific phenomenon. It is worth mentioning that the model goes further to emphasize that perhaps there is a need for the structural, environmental and attitudinal barriers in the environment to be a bit accommodative to those with impairments. This is to allow those with impairments to fully participate in life as other citizens. On the basis of the social model, therefore, disability is seen as a problem of society rather than a problem of the individual with disability.

The idea that disability is not a static, absolute category and has been defined in various ways over time is a key component of the social model. The social model does not aim to modify individuals with disabilities to fit into society; rather, it aims to modify society to accommodate people with disabilities. It backs the idea that individuals with disabilities should be treated equally and have the right to participate fully in society (French & Swain, 2011). This concept has caused a change in how people around the world view disability. When creating policies and offering services, this model provides a suitable and valid perspective. By emphasizing the social, economic, and political systems, the model has been effective in increasing the visibility of disability on the political agenda.

However, the social model of disability has received surmountable criticism from various scholars. Shakespeare (2016) notes that, the social model of disability has effectively denied the fact that the physical and emotional pain and suffering experienced by persons with disabilities due to their impairments has no impact on their practical daily living. In addition, French & Swain (2011) argue that the social model of disability has not made adequate accommodation for the subjective

experiences of pain, fatigue, depression, and to an extent, the uncertainty that persons with disabilities inevitably experience as a result of their impairment. They claim that ‘an individual's activities may be so severely limited by an impairment, such as pain or a chronic illness, that the limitations of the outside world become irrelevant.’ Despite this drawback, the social model of disability is currently the accepted global perspective on and approach to ‘disability’. Because it can examine the social, physical, and attitude environments that the visually impaired engage with, this model is appropriate for this research topic.

As such, this model helped the researcher capture the experiences, and feelings of major respondents and all other parties in the community under study. Having said this, it is imperative to highlight that the model is gender-blind on all the issues raised and, therefore, the need to generate a framework that is inclusive of women.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

It is clear from the literature assessment that biological, social, and cultural elements have a significant role in determining gender roles. The visually challenged experience difficulties with movement, falls, and mental health after being assigned these gender roles. As a result, others like family and close friends are essential to their abilities to overcome these obstacles. Therefore, as the Conceptual Framework below shows, all of these elements have a significant influence in deciding how women in the Kipsigis community perform their gender roles.

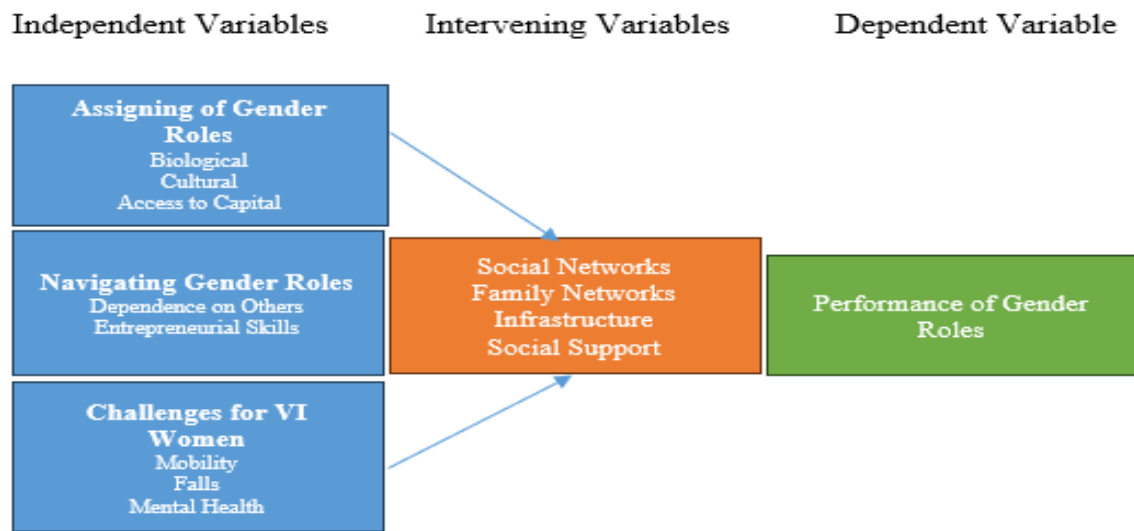


Figure 2.2: The Conceptual Framework showing Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable for the Study

From the conceptual framework above, it can be noted that assigning gender roles among the Kipsigis is based on biological, social and cultural factors. Among visually impaired women in the Kipsigis community, the performance of gender roles is negatively impacted. As a result of their visual impairment, Kipsigis women resort to depending on others to help them perform their gender roles. For example, family members and close friends. In this case, social networks and support, family networks, and infrastructure available are intervening variables for the study. It is expected that some of the challenges that visually impaired women from the Kipsigis community face affect their mobility. As such, the study recommends possible strategies that can be adopted to mitigate the challenges faced by visually impaired women in performing their gender roles. These will be based on the findings.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A review of the relevant literature was provided in the previous chapter. The study's methodology is covered in this chapter. The research design, variables employed in the study, study location, target population, research tools, pilot study, data collecting, analysis, and presentation processes were among the elements that were separated out.

3.2 Research Design

The study design for this research was a descriptive survey. This design was useful in this study since the participants were expected to describe the condition as they felt it and give out their experiences. Neuman (2013) asserts that this research design is beneficial since it offers a thorough and incredibly exact representation of the concept being studied. Additionally, it can be applied to combine quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used in this study. In this case, the number of respondents was expressed numerically while the description of how well they performed their gender roles was expressed qualitatively. The suitability of this research design was that it ensured the researcher did not control the variables. Using a descriptive study design implies that the researcher has no influence over the independent variables (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This implied that a true picture of the events was readily conveyed and that description was unaffected. As a result, the researcher determined that this was the best instrument for the job.

3.3 Variables/Categories of Analysis

Dependent and independent variables were used. The independent variables included assigning gender roles, navigating gender roles among visually impaired women, and challenges that visually impaired women face. All these independent variables were measured against the dependent variable which is women's performance of gender roles. These variables were important in defining the scope of the study in that it only covered areas stipulated. It is expected that the outlined independent variables will affect the dependent variable in the study.

3.4 Location/Site of the Study

The research was done in Ainamoi Constituency, Kericho County Kenya. Ainamoi Sub County is located in the larger Kericho County, and it is a peri-urban which covers approximately 258.50km² and is located on a latitude 0.5° and longitude 35.25°. Administratively, Ainamoi as a constituency has 6 electoral wards, namely Kapsoit, Ainamoi, Kapkugerwet, Kipchebor, Kipchimchim and Kapsaos (County Government of Kericho, 2023) (See Appendices V, VI & VII for maps on the location of the study area).

The area has a population of 156,786 people. Thus, in Kericho County, Ainamoi is among the densely populated areas. Out of this number, there are 2000 individuals with vision impairment, with 463 being totally blind (213 males and 250 females) (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). From this, it is clear that quite a good number of residents in the chosen area are visually impaired. The high number of visually impaired has seen the umbrella organization – the Kenya Union of the Blind (KUB) set up an office in Kericho County. Among the Kipsigis who live in the study

area, some of the gender roles that women perform include feeding their families, trading (shopping), crop harvesting, and milking among others (von Bülow, 1992). This implies that in the performance of their roles, women have to move from one point to another. As a consequence, visual impairment may negatively impact the effectiveness of the performance of gender roles.

3.5 Target Population

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

The research utilized convenience sampling. As a technique, convenience sampling refers to a process in which samples are drawn from a population at hand – accessible and available (Andrade, 2021). The sampling technique allowed for selecting cases through pre-existing organizations, in this case, the Kenya Union for the Blind. The appropriateness of convenience sampling was that the priority was on the availability and willingness of subjects to participate in the study (Lavrakas, Traugott, Kennedy, Holbrook, de Leeuw, & West., 2019). For the current study, convenience sampling ensured that the chosen participants were those registered with organizations dealing with matters of visual impairment. The study also involved a community-based rehabilitation officer from Kenya Union for the Blind and staff at the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, Kericho office. It can be noted that we selected research participants from the Kenya Union for the Blind members as they have their office in Kericho and as such it was easy to locate them.

3.5.2 Sample Size

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019), Ainamoi Sub-County has 463 visually impaired people (213 males and 250 females). The study aimed to

conveniently select visually impaired females. To reach the sample size for the research, Fisher's formula was used as below;

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where;

n= the required minimum sample size

p= estimated proportion of the target population who have the characteristics being measured

q=1-p

d=level of statistical significance sat at +or - 5% or 0.05

z=SD corresponding to 95% or Confidence level=1.96

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384$$

Since the Population (N) is less 10,000, the final sample size (nf) will be:

$$nf = \frac{n}{1+n/N}$$

$$nf = 384 / (1 + (384/250))$$

$$nf = 384 + 2.536$$

$$nf = 151$$

10% will be added for non-response:

$$151 \times 0.1 = 15$$

Therefore, the final sample size will be:

$$n=151+15= \mathbf{166 \text{ Respondents}}$$

From the above, 166 visually impaired women from Ainamoi were conveniently selected for the study.

3.6 Research Instruments

3.6.1 Survey (Questionnaires)

Questionnaires were the main data collection instruments. Here, close-ended questions with a set of pre-defined responses were used to guide respondents. Because they can quickly and affordably gather data from participants, questionnaires were selected for the study (Brace, 2018). Since the visually handicapped were the target demographic, it was assumed that the researcher personally gathered the data; nonetheless, this had no bearing on the validity and reliability of the instrument being used. The researcher was able to swiftly and easily quantify the questionnaire's answers. Using close-ended questions in the questionnaires, it was easier and quicker to answer; helped the researcher collect measurable data; increase response rate; and get answers that can easily be compared (Patten, 2016). The questionnaires were administered to the 166 conveniently selected visually impaired women from Ainamoi Sub-County, Kericho County (See Appendix II for the study questionnaire).

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

As a research instrument, FGDs are a qualitative approach used by researchers to have an in-depth understanding of an issue under investigation. Through FGDs, a researcher collects data from a sample that has been purposely selected. Participants

in FGDs are from similar backgrounds or share similar experiences (Barbour, 2016). As a result, the participants are in a position to air their views on a certain topic or subject. In FGDs, there is a facilitator to introduce topics to help participants engage in a natural discussion among themselves. The use of FGDs as a research instrument was suitable in the research as it allowed the researcher to explore the subject in detail. For example, given the natural setting created by FGDs, participants felt free to agree or disagree on issues. This was vital in exploring the issue of visual impairment and performance of gender roles deeply as disagreements among participants offer certain insights on the subject. Similarly, the range of feelings and notions on the issue eliminates any discrepancies that may have been captured in the quantitative data collected through questionnaires (Barbour, 2016). A sample of 20 visually impaired women was selected from the 166 participants to take part in the FGDs. 2 FGDs were conducted, each with 10 participants (See Appendix II for the FGD Schedule). The respondents to the FGD were selected from the Kenya Union for the Blind members who were totally blind women from Ainamoi aged 18 and above.

3.7 Pre-Testing/Piloting Study

Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2019) define piloting as a small study aimed at testing research instruments before the main research. It is, thus, an important phase to determine if there are any problems with research instruments before their full implementation during the actual data collection. On the basis of the results of a pilot study, researchers can make necessary adjustments so that they effectively collect relevant and valid data to answer research questions (Ruel, Wagner, & Gillespie, 2015). For this study, a pilot study with 15 visually impaired women in the study area was undertaken. The choice of the 15 was in line with in (2017) who argues that

piloting uses between 12 and 30 participants. Questionnaires were then administered to the selected visually impaired women to explore the appropriateness of the research instrument. On the basis of the findings of the piloting, necessary adjustments were made to the research instrument, thereby improving its effectiveness.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity in research refers to how accurately an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Validity is important in research as it gives it integrity or credibility. On the basis of the validity test, a researcher can determine whether results can be generalized to similar situations or contexts (Baumgarten, 2012). In this study, a pilot study was used. The questions were thereafter modified accordingly based on the results of the pilot study to ensure they collected relevant data.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability as a coefficient looks at the extent to which a research instrument can produce consistent results for various tests (Ruel, Wagner, & Gillespie, 2015). This implies that if research is carried out using a similar instrument, it has to give similar results – scores do not waver. For this study, the internal consistency was determined using the Cronbach's alpha (α).

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

A list of persons living with visual impairment was obtained from National Council for Persons with Disability. The researcher then contacted the respondents and administered the questionnaire. The researcher, with the aid of an assistant, personally administered the questionnaires. Since the respondents were blind, the researcher and

the assistant helped in filling the responses. The questions were read to the respondents, and they were to answer the questions orally. With that, the researcher filled in the questionnaires. The researcher let the participants to keep the questionnaire and decide on a new date for potential return in situations where they were unable to complete it and return it. To make sure the questionnaires were returned at the scheduled time, a follow-up was conducted.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Both qualitative and quantitative information was gathered. Every questionnaire that was returned was categorized, arranged, and examined for uniformity. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) was used to enter the data. Analysis was done on both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data was analyzed using a thematic analysis, in which significant conclusions were reached and the topics were summarized. Conversely, quantitative data was descriptively evaluated using frequencies and percentages. Discussions ensued after analysis, and significant conclusions were reached. Tables, charts, graphs, and summaries were used to display the data.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

Kenyatta University provided the researcher with an introduction letter, and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) granted the researcher permission to conduct the study. After that, the researcher went to the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) to get a sampling frame and respondent connections. After contacting the respondents, the researcher gave them an

explanation of the study's objectives. The researcher made sure that the material collected was solely used for research and that confidentiality was maintained.

Informed Consent: The researcher informed the participants of the purpose of the study. He went further to assure them data collected from them was to be used only for academic purposes.

Respect for people's rights, dignity and diversity: The researcher firmly rejected any form of discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national background, religion, sexual preference, disability, health issues, marital or family status, or parental roles. He strived to eliminate prejudice in his work. The researcher acknowledged and respected the freedom of people to hold diverse beliefs, opinions, and perspectives.

No Harm Intended: The researcher strived to protect the social and psychological reputation of the respondents in all cases.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

A presentation of the research methodology was made in chapter three. The presentation, analysis, and discussion of the study data are the main topics of this chapter. This aligns with the goals and objectives of the study. The aim of the study is to assess the implications of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles in the family among Kipsigis women.

4.2 Response Rate

The sample size for the study was 166 participants who visually impaired women from the study area. Out of the 166 questionnaires administered by the researcher, 70 participants filled in correctly. This gave a response rate of 42.16%. Kothari (2004) argues that a response rate above 50% can allow for generalization of findings. Because of the low reported response rate, the study's findings in this instance cannot be extrapolated to other study regions.

4.3 Demographic Information

This section outlines results on the key demographics of the participants; age and marital status.

4.3.1 Age of Respondents

Results showed that those between 26 and 35 years were the majority at 25 (35.7%), closely followed by those aged between 36 and 45 years (34.3%). On the other hand, those aged between 18 and 25 were 10 (14.3%) and the remaining group aged above

55 were 11 (15.7%). It implies that a most participants were between 26 and 35 years as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Age of Participants

Age			
18-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	Above 55 Years
10	25	24	11
14.30%	35.70%	34.30%	15.70%

4.3.2 Marital Status of Participants

For marital status, 34 participants were married (representing 48.57%). The other 36 (51.43%) were not as shown in Table 4.2. It implies that the research was not biased based on the marital status of participants. The research considered visually impaired women who are married as this would give a clear picture of the interaction between their impairment and the three roles of women: reproductive, productive and community.

Table 4.2: Marital Status of Participants

	Marital Status	
	Yes	No
Frequency	34	36
Percent	48.57%	51.43%

4.4 Gender roles assigned to Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub-County.

Details about the study participants' demographics were provided in the previous section. The findings for the study's primary goal, which was to determine the gender roles that Kipsigis women in the study area were allocated, are presented in this part.

4.4.1 Gender Roles Determined at Birth?

Respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement that in the Kipsigis community, gender roles to be performed are evident at birth. Results showed that most of the respondents (61.4%) strongly agreed with 4.3 % agreeing and another 24.3% being neutral as illustrated in Table 4.3. From the above response, it can be concluded that a greater percentage of respondents agreed that gender roles are evident at birth.

Table 4.3: In my Community, Gender Roles to be Performed Are Evident at Birth

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7
Disagree	3	4.3
Neutral	17	24.3
Agree	3	4.3
Strongly Agree	43	61.4
Total	70	100.0

4.4.2 Housework as a Gender Role Assigned to Women

On whether women are assigned housework, results indicated that 61.4% of the participants strongly agreed while 21.4% were neutral as shown in Table 4.4. From the response, it was established that house duties were assigned to women with visual impairment. This is further illustrated by (von Bülow, 1992), who notes that gender roles have been traditionally dictated by culture and societal structures. The author further notes that while specific information on the relation between gender and visually impaired women in the Kipsigis community is not readily available, it can be concluded that these women are integrated into the community with respect to their abilities and the level of support the community provides to them.

Table 4.4: Women are Mainly Assigned Housework

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	4.3
Disagree	6	8.6
Neutral	15	21.4
Agree	3	4.3
Strongly Agree	43	61.4
Total	70	100.0

4.4.3 Housework and Formal Employment

On the issue of housework fitting women as the majority are not in formal employment, it was found that 27 (38.6%) strongly agreed, 18 (25.7%) agreed and 13 (18.6%) were neutral. On the other hand, 10% disagreed and 5.7% strongly disagreed as the Table 4.5 illustrates. Results implied that the majority of visually impaired women in the Kipsigis community are not in formal employment.

Table 4.5: Housework fits Women because the Majority are not in Formal Employment

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7
Disagree	7	10.0
Neutral	13	18.6
Agree	18	25.7
Strongly Agree	27	38.6
Total	69	98.6
System	1	1.4
	70	100.0

4.4.4 Disabilities and Gender Roles

Respondents were also required to state whether disabilities like visual impairments determined assigned roles. Results indicated that 41.4% and 24.3% strongly agreed

and agreed respectively. While 14.3% were neutral, 12.9% disagreed with the statement (See Figure 4.1). From this study, it was concluded that society considers disability as a determinant in assigning gender roles. However, from the FGDs, it was established that negative attitudes and stigma from the members of the society makes it difficult for women with visual impairment to be given duties at home as illustrated below;

Anonymous: *“Yes, society perceives women with visual impairment as people who are incapable of performing various tasks at the family level. Because of this, other family members are given duties like sweeping, fetching firewood and even going to the market to buy food items while am left doing nothing in the house.*

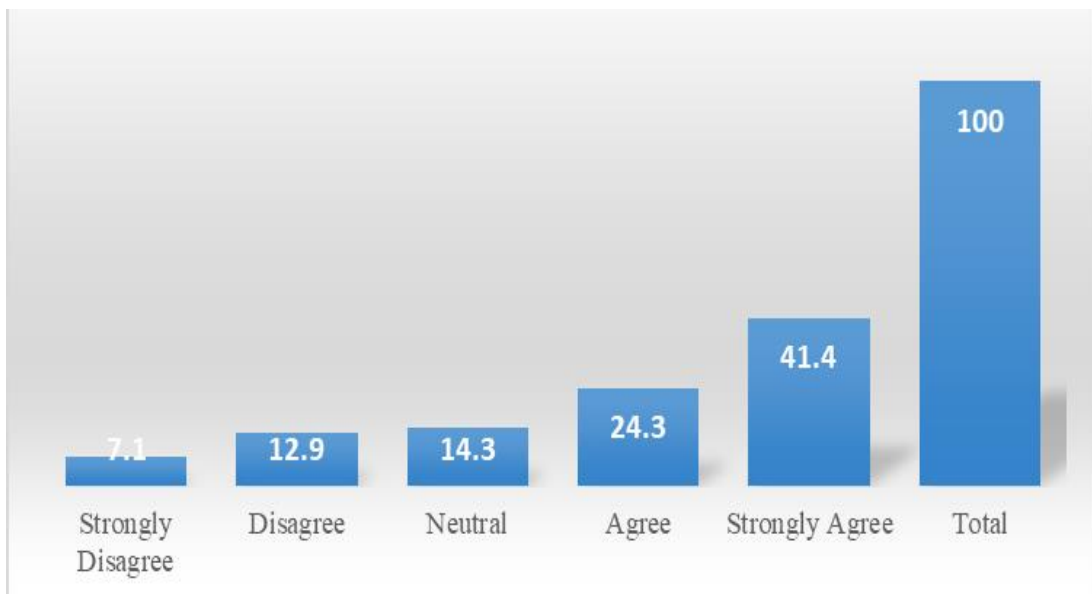


Figure 4.1: Disabilities Like Visual Impairments Determine Assigned Roles

It emerged from the results that attitudes towards disability can vary and be influenced by culture, level of education, level of awareness and experiences. The findings align with those by Zheng (2016) that attitudes towards people with disabilities can greatly affect the way they are included in society. Moreover, societal

behaviors and attitudes can interplay with other social identities such as gender. Zheng (2016) suggests that education and exposure can play an important role in changing societal attitudes toward disability. Therefore, there is a need to increase awareness and facilitate positive engagements between the community and persons with disabilities. Through this, Zheng (2016) believes that this will foster a more inclusive and understanding society.

4.4.5 Culture and Gender Roles

Results also showed that the Kipsigis culture is a key determinant of gender roles assigned to visually impaired women. As shown in Table 4.6, 45.7% strongly agreed whereas another 20% agreed with the statement on culture as a determinant of assigned roles. Although 14.3% were neutral, the remaining 14 disagreed. These results showed that gender roles in the Kipsigis community are culturally determined. This is evident in women being assigned roles based on qualities like gentleness, passiveness, or care. On the other hand, men are assigned roles that require strength, aggression, or dominance. The findings tally with those by Ljunge (2016) and Palermo, Chzhen, Balvin, & Kajula (2020) who acknowledge that culture is a key determinant of gender roles. In this regard, Worthy, Lavigne, and Romero (2020) found that as a result of culture, children are aware of gender roles at a young age. Such children cannot only label others' gender, but also sort objects based on the different gender categories. By the time these children reach 4 or 5 years, they are entrenched in gender roles that are appropriate as per a given culture. Worthy, Lavigne, and Romero (2020) further acknowledge that the inability of a child to conform to appropriate gender roles in society may see them face criticism, bullying,

marginalization, or rejection by their peers. Consequently, the findings imply that culture plays a key role in determining gender roles in society.

Table 4.6: My Culture Determines the Gender Roles I’m Assigned as A Visually Impaired

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	10.0
Disagree	7	10.0
Neutral	10	14.3
Agree	14	20.0
Strongly Agree	32	45.7
Total	70	100.0

4.4.6 Caregiving and Domestic Responsibilities

The research, results also showed that Kipsigis women still perform caregiving and domestic responsibilities despite their visual impairment. As shown in Figure 4.2, 41% strongly agreed, 27.1% agreed and 18.6% were neutral. According to the data, 86.7% of the respondents supported the statement that, even with their visual impairment, Kipsigis women under the study performed caregiving and domestic responsibilities. Another 13.3% of respondents disagreed as illustrated. The study was also supported by the responses in the FGD.

***Anonymous;** “Who will wash my clothes and cook for my child? I have to do it myself by pushing my family members to allow me to work. I have to prove that I am a real woman. I have to do these things you know...otherwise I will be nothing.”*

From the above results, it indicated that despite their disability, women were still assigned caregiving responsibilities. Some of them felt it was their duty and obligation to look after their families, while others felt that their families were likely

to suffer if they did not perform caregiving and domestic responsibilities. Therefore, they pushed their family members to give them responsibilities in the home.

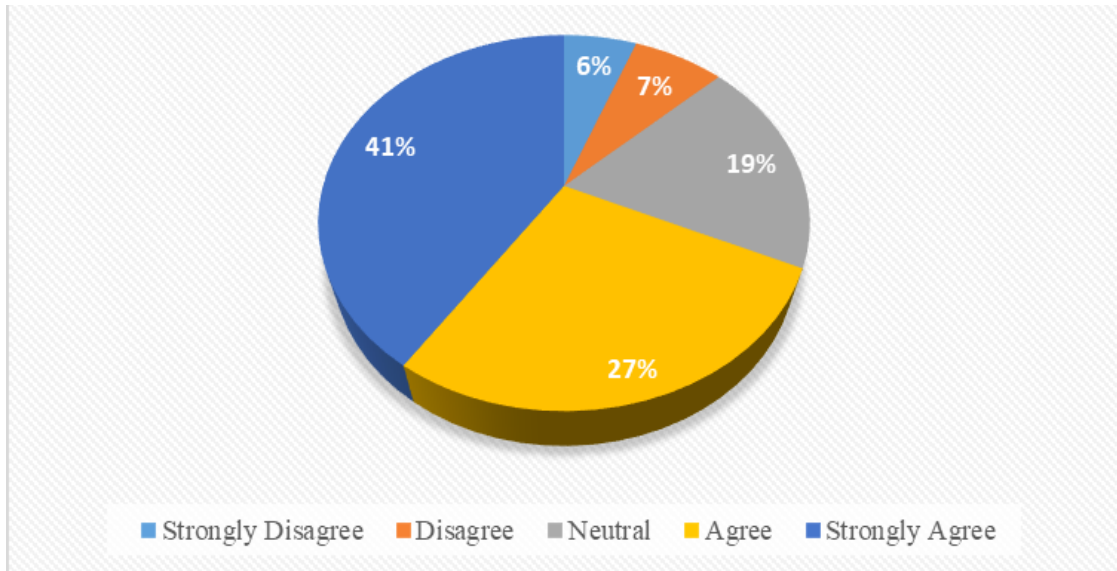


Figure 4.2: As a Visually Impaired Woman, I Still Have to Perform Caregiving & Domestic Responsibilities

In the study by Zheng (2016), the visually impaired women interviewed, all experienced pregnancy and childbirth with joy to become mothers. The study concluded that the presence of adequate family support promotes positive self-esteem among women with visual impairment in performing caregiving and domestic responsibilities.

4.4.7 Socialization and Gender Roles

The researcher also sought to know if Kipsigis women had been socialized to believe that men and women have to perform certain gender roles. It was found that 41.1% strongly agreed, another 22.9% agreed and 18.6% were neutral respectively. Only 5.7% strongly disagreed as shown in Table 4.7. From previous studies, Thébaud,

Kornrich, & Ruppner (2021) note that socialization is a key determinant of gender roles in society. This has also been emphasized by Verhellen, Dens, & de Pelsmacker (2016) using the Belgium case, noting that as a result of socialization, women become caregivers or housewives. However, (von Bülow, 1992) observes that the Kipsigis community have been influenced by cultural and societal structures which have been prejudiced by modality and colonization. The resilience of Kipsigis women has resulted in the reshaping of gender roles which possibly could result in more engagement in socialization and inclusion of visually impaired women in society.

Table 4.7: I have been Socialized as a Visually Impaired Person to Believe that Men and Women in My Community Perform Certain Gender Roles

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7
Disagree	7	10.0
Neutral	13	18.6
Agree	16	22.9
Strongly Agree	29	41.4
Total	69	98.6
System	1	1.4
	70	100.0

4.4.8 Visual Impairment and Gender Roles

Even at the community level, results showed that it is expected that the visually impaired perform certain gender roles. This is illustrated in the number of those who agreed at 37.1% and another 27.1% strongly agreeing as per the Figure 4.3. However, it emerged from the FGD that among visually impaired women, they feel that they should not be exempt from performing gender roles given their condition. This is

because despite their condition, visually impaired women can perform any task/role with reasonable support at the family level. A response from a participant in the FGD;

Anonymous; *“No, the visually impaired can perform any task with reasonable support from family or friends. If someone can guide me to the river, I can fetch water and carry the water safely home. When I have water, I will clean the utensils, cook and do everything else without any problem.”*

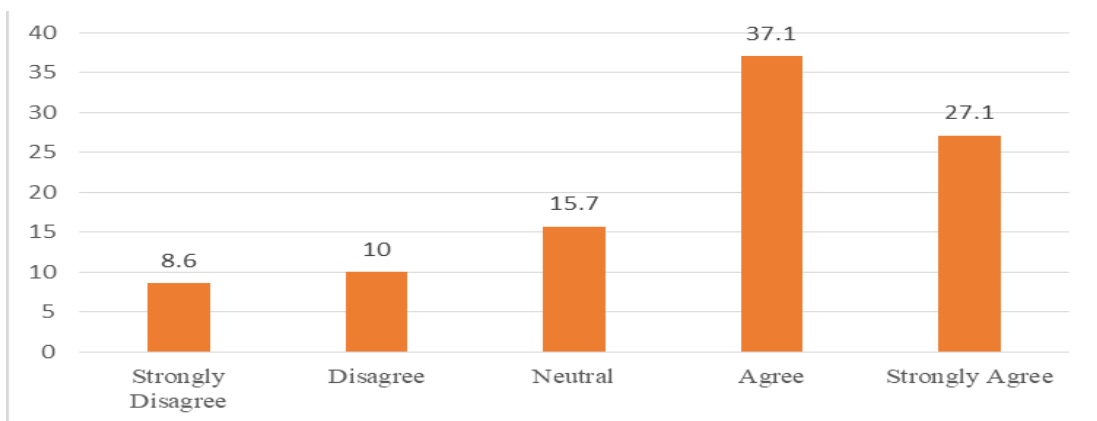


Figure 4.3: My Community Expects Me to Perform Certain Gender Roles as a Visually Impaired Woman

From the above findings, it is evident that gender roles within the Kipsigis community are socially determined. Thus, at birth, a child sex is identified which informs the socialization process through which boys and girls learn their gender roles. As a result, women are assigned housework at birth mainly attributable to the fact that not many of them may be formally employed. Even women who are formally employed are expected to perform domestic chores. Similarly, culture was seen as a key determinant when it comes to assigning gender roles. Gender roles ascribed to women among the Kipsigis in this case include caregiving and domestic responsibilities despite the fact that many of them have visual impairments. This is unlike men who are assigned roles as a result of their strength, dominance and aggression at the family

level. The roles at the family level are also as a result of the socialization process that differs between men and women. As a result, both men and women grow up knowing that they have to perform different gender roles. This perception has meant that even women who are visually impaired have to perform certain gender roles assigned to them at the family level.

From the results, it has been shown that among the Kipsigis community, women mainly perform housework as a gender role – caregiving and domestic responsibilities. This is attributable to the fact that most of them are not in formal employment. Nonetheless, results also show that even those women who are formally employed are expected as per the Kipsigis culture to perform their gender roles. Disabilities like visual impairments are determinants when it comes to assigning gender roles at the family level. For the visually impaired as a PWD group, they are mainly seen by other members of society as not capable to perform certain duties. Culture is also a key determinant of gender roles among the Kipsigis. For instance, culturally, women are assigned roles on the basis of qualities like gentleness, passiveness, or care. On the other hand, men are assigned roles that require strength, aggression, or dominance. From the Social Model of Disability perspective, it can be noted that structural factors in terms of underlying norms and ideologies among the Kipsigis determine how gender roles are assigned. This implies the theoretical framework highlighted earlier is applicable to the research.

4.5 How Visually Impaired Women Cope with Challenges in Performing their Gender Roles

In the previous section, the study considered perceived gender roles of women among the Kipsigis. The purpose of this section is to present results to attain the second objective – to determine how visually impaired women cope with challenges in performing their gender roles in the study area.

The researcher used a Likert Scale with respondents stating whether they agreed or disagreed with certain statements. It aimed at looking at some of the strategies that the visually impaired use to overcome challenges, thereby performing chores.

4.5.1 Impact of Visual Impairment on Performance of Gender Roles

A majority of respondents – 27 (38.6%) strongly agreed that their visual impairment impacted negatively on their performance of gender roles. It is also noted that 7(10%) strongly disagreed while 9 (12.9%) disagreed with the variable statement as shown in Table 4.8. The FGD also support the findings as shown:

***Anonymous:** “Without my sight, I miss so many things: I can’t go to the river to fetch water, I cannot go to the market alone, and I cannot even get firewood from the nearest forest...I just need support.”*

Table 4.8: Due to my Visual Impairment, the Performance of Gender Roles is Greatly Affected

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	10.0
Disagree	9	12.9
Neutral	8	11.4
Agree	19	27.1
Strongly Agree	27	38.6
Total	70	100.0

The findings, therefore, indicate that the majority of the respondents noted that visual impairment impacts women's performance of gender roles. This has been acknowledged in previous studies on the subject. For instance, Coleman-Fountain, & McLaughlin (2013) and Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019) found that impairment impacts negatively on the ability of women to perform their gender roles.

4.5.2 Visual Impairment and Dependence in Performance of Gender Roles

As a result of the visual impairment, there is a tendency for the affected to depend on family members and close friends in the performance of their gender roles. On dependence on family members as a strategy, 40% strongly agreed that they depended on family members to perform their gender roles due to their visual impairment. 20% agreed, 16% were neutral, while 13% and 11% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively as the Figure 4.4 illustrates. The aspect of dependence has been mentioned by Zebardast, et al., (2015) and Stevelink, Malcolm, & Fear (2015), who cite that family members become key. Here, it was found that visually impaired women may develop a level of dependence among family members in

the performance of their gender roles in society. The respondents support the findings as shown;

Anonymous: *“For me to do my work, I have to make many friends and be close to my family members. They are the ones who help me to go to the market, fetch firewood and even help to supervise the child in doing homework.”*

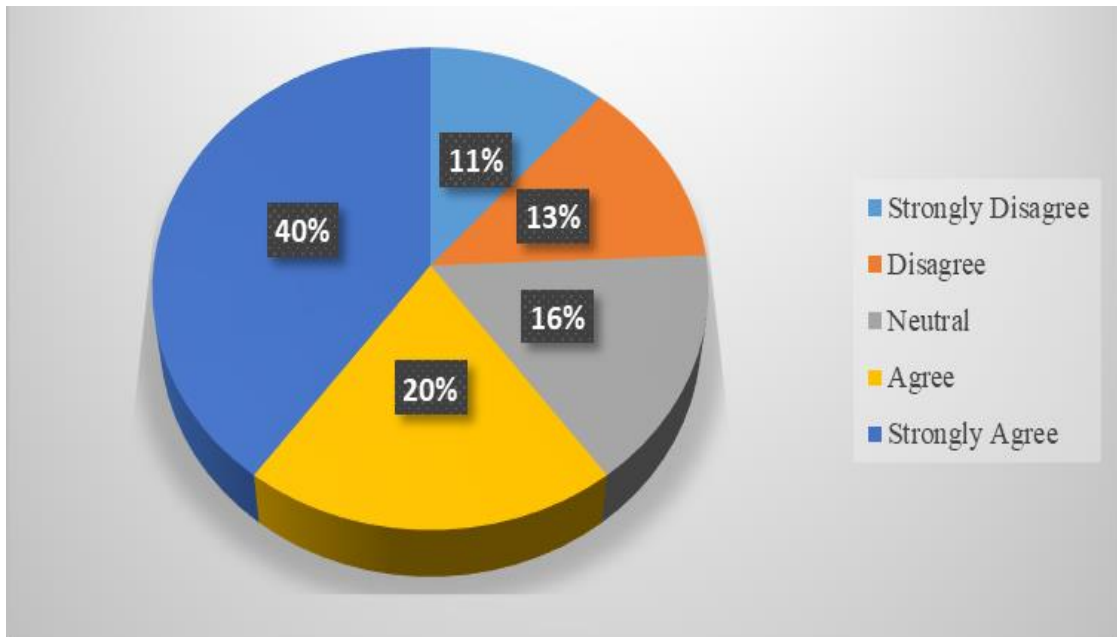


Figure 4.4: I Depend on My Family Members in Performance of my Gender Roles as a Woman

4.5.3 Dependence on Family and Friends among Visually Impaired Women

On dependence of friends to perform gender roles among visually impaired women, 32.9% strongly agreed and a similar proportion of respondents agreed. Nonetheless, 20% disagreed with 5.7% being neutral as Figure 4.5 shows. Nonetheless, despite the support from family and friends, visually impaired women feel it is not enough to help them cope with challenges as they perform their duties. From the FGD, it was noted that the support is not enough as family and friends that the visually impaired

are overprotective. As a result, they fear engaging the visually impaired because they fear that they may get hurt when performing their duties. Similarly, they did not support activities of the visually impaired feel this is burdensome. In addition, given that the support is not remunerated, those offering support lack motivation to do so at times. Here are their sentiments on support from family and friends;

Anonymous: *“No, because they are overprotective. They fear engaging us because they feel that we may get hurt when performing our duties. You know our compound is full of ditches, stones here and there, even peg to tether our cows. All these, are a risk to me as I move around to do my work.”*

Anonymous: *“They do not support our activities because they feel this is burdensome. Some times when I wish to go to the market, my sister refuses to accompany me because she feels am stressing her or interfering with her schedule. So, I end up not going. This is the time I wish I had sight to do my work independently without stressing my friends or relatives.”*

Anonymous: *“You know what? If we paid them something small, or gave a token of appreciation, maybe they could find a reason to walk around with us and as such, make it less stressful to get someone to guide us. Unfortunately, this money or something to give as a token is not always there to give out.”*

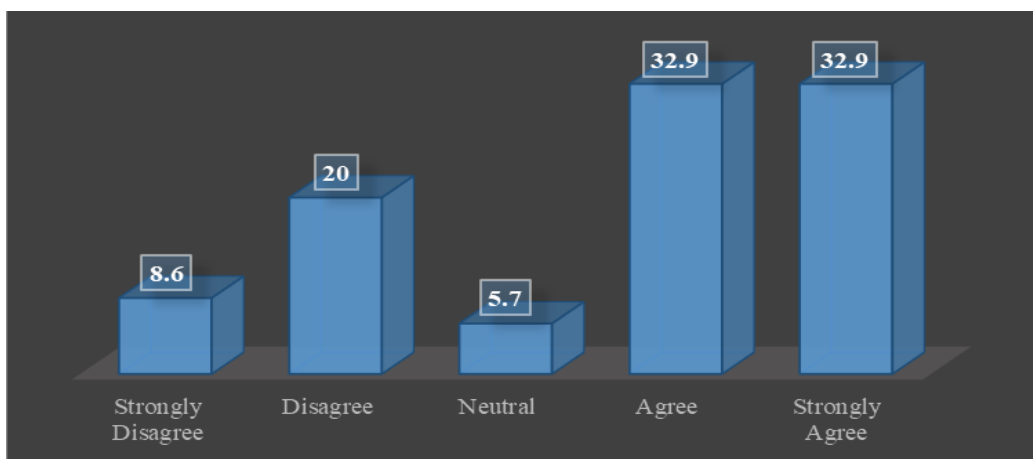


Figure 4.5: I depend on my Friends In Performance of my Gender Roles as a Woman

4.5.4 Dependence Strategies in Performance of Gender Roles

The researcher sought to establish from the respondents if dependence on others (family members/friends) helped in the performance of their roles. From the results, 42.9% agreed and 22.9% strongly agreed. However, 18.6% disagreed, implying that even with dependence, they were not able to perform their gender roles as Table 4.9 illustrates. In the absence of someone to depend on, it is upon visually impaired women to cope with challenges in performing their duties. From FGD results, it was established that visually impaired women cope in performing their roles in various ways. First, visually impaired women with no family support arrange items in a specific order for easy identification and maintaining a specific routine. This is to avoid confusion or forgetting. Secondly, they use motorcycle services to go to places. For example, going to the market to buy food for the family. Visually impaired women also identify a friendly seller whom they can contact/call to do deliveries of necessary items instead of travelling. Lastly, visually impaired women label items for easy identification and mastering shapes and textures for various items in the house.

Here are their replies;

Anonymous: *“As a blind woman I have to work smart. I arrange my items in a specific order for easy identification. And also maintain a specific routine to avoid confusion or forgetting”*

Anonymous: *“I use motorcycle services to go to the market to buy food for the family. You know bodabodas can go anywhere. So instead of disturbing my family members, I simply call the bodaboda rider who is my customer to take me to the market and bring me back. The goodness with bodabodas, they even know where I want to go, so it is not a problem to locate my sellers in the market.*

Anonymous: “For me, I have a customer whom I can call to deliver items instead of travelling to the market. This will save me time to do other things before it is too late.”

Anonymous: “I label items for easy identification and mastering shapes and textures for various items in the house. If I don’t do so, I may end up putting salt to the boiling tea instead of putting sugar. You can imagine how the family will react if this happens.”

Table 4.9: As a Result of My Dependence on others (Family Members/Friends), I Perform my Gender Roles Better

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	8.6
Disagree	13	18.6
Neutral	5	7.1
Agree	30	42.9
Strongly Agree	16	22.9
Total	70	100.0

4.5.5 Organizational Strategies in Performance of Gender Roles

Given that many of the strategies that visually impaired women can use in overcoming challenges in performing chores are at the family level, the researcher explored the issue further. This was by asking respondents in the FGD if they felt that businesses can also play a role in limiting challenges that the visually impaired encounter especially when shopping. Visually impaired women noted that the provision of assistance in the identification of items and clearing pathways for ease of movement from one store to another can go a long way in helping them overcome challenges. Here are their responses;

Anonymous: “I will say providing assistance when it comes to identifying items, I want to buy makes it easier to make my choices and save on time. This assistance also gives me confidence that whatever I have chosen to buy is the right item.”

Anonymous: *“I think if these sellers remove obstacles from pathways, it can be very easy for us without sight to move around. It will even help those who are guiding us to maneuver from one store to another when shopping”*

From the above results, it is emerging that coping in performing gender roles as a visually impaired woman is challenging among the Kipsigis. As a result of these challenges, the visually impaired are negatively affected as far as the performance of their gender roles is concerned. This has meant that many of the visually impaired women have to depend on others in the performance of their gender roles. In this case, dependents included family members, as well as close friends. It is these who offer support, thereby facilitating the visually impaired in completing their gender roles. Nonetheless, even cases of support in the performance of gender roles are limited. This is because most of those offering assistance are seen as overprotective. From the results, it is the visually impaired feeling that those offering assistance tend to be overprotective. Consequently, it implies that the visually impaired cope in performing their gender roles by seeking assistance of friends and close family members. Family and friends play an instrumental role in emotionally supporting the visually impaired as they go about performing their gender roles.

4.6 Challenges Faced by Visually Impaired Kipsigis Women in the Performance of Gender Roles

In the previous section, the study considered how the visually impaired women among the Kipsigis cope with challenges in performing their gender roles. This section of the study presents results on objective three - to determine challenges that visually impaired women in the study area face as they go about performing their gender roles.

4.6.1 Difficulties in Performance of Gender Roles

On the issue of difficulties, 41.4% strongly agreed that they experienced difficulties in the performance of duties given the visual impairment. 15 respondents agreed and 17 were neutral to the statement as table 4.10 illustrates.

Table 4.10: I Experience Difficulties When Performing my Duties as a Visually Impaired Woman

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7
Disagree	5	7.1
Neutral	17	24.3
Agree	15	21.4
Strongly Agree	29	41.4
Total	70	100.0

4.6.2 Infrastructure and Performance of Gender Roles Among the Visually Impaired

Among the visually impaired, challenges in performance of duties are compounded by the infrastructure in an area one stays. To determine if Kipsigis women with visual impairment face challenges as a result of the poor road network in the area, the results were varied. 48.6% strongly agreed that because of the poor road network, they encountered challenges as they went about performing their duties while another 18.6% agreed. However, 21.4% were neutral with 7.1% and 4.3% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing respectively as shown in Figure 4.6. Poor infrastructural designs have been cited as barriers to PWDs like those with visual impairment. For example, Onsomu, Mose, & Munene (2022) point out that it remains a challenge for the

visually impaired to access public transport as the vehicles are not inclusive. This implies that PWDs such as the visually impaired need support to use such in their mobility.

A study by Tonui & Kimetto (2020) acknowledges that although there are laws to ensure existing infrastructure is disability-friendly, implementation remains a challenge. As a result, PWDs like the visually impaired continue to face challenges in their mobility and accessibility. To access stores, results of the FGD showed that visually impaired women use a sighted guide. Similarly, visually impaired women ask for assistance from friendly shop attendants to access or enter stores in performing their gender roles. By so doing, it was noted that these visually impaired women overcome accessibility challenges caused by the poor infrastructure.

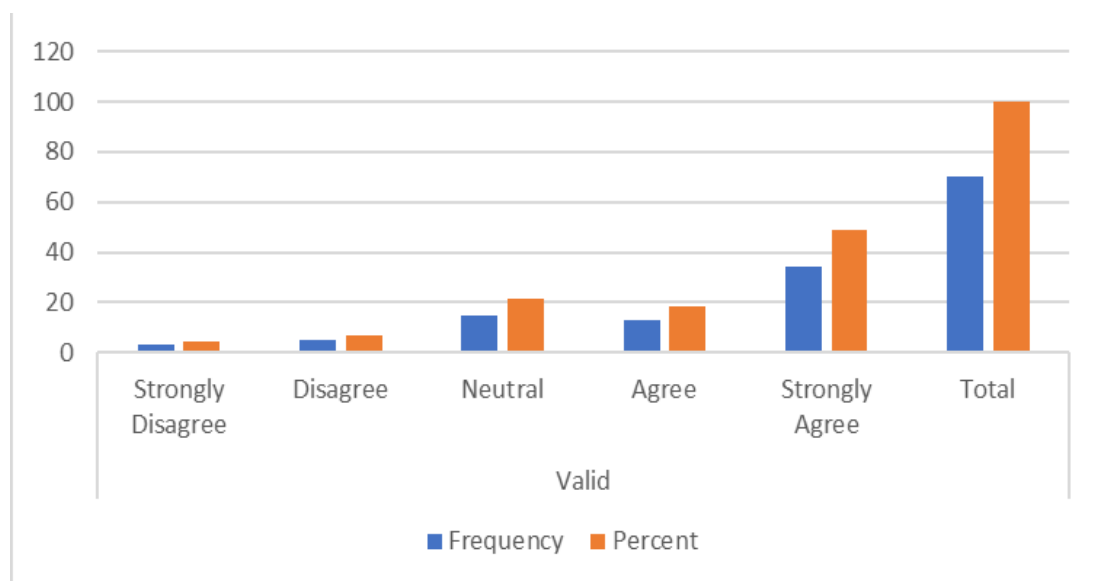


Figure 4.6: As a Result of the Poor Road Network, I Encounter Challenges as I go About Performing my Duties

4.6.3 Road Network and Performance of Gender Roles

As a result of the poor road network, visually impaired women may find it challenging when moving around. From the study, it was found that 44.3% and another 21.4% strongly agreed and agreed respectively on experiencing challenges when moving about due to their visual impairment. Only a small percentage (5.7% and 7.1% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively) noted that they did not experience challenges whenever they moved around in performance of duties. The remaining 21.4% were neutral, implying they felt that their visual impairment did not in any way impact the performance of duties as shown in Figure 4.7. Based on the results of the FGD, it was found that visually impaired women are forced to use a number of options in overcoming challenges attributable to the poor road network in the study area. These options include the use of a motorcycle; a guide when walking; and orientation and mobility skills whenever possible. Through these options, they are able to minimize challenges attributable to mobility challenges in the performance of gender roles. These are some of the views of visually impaired women from FGDs;

Anonymous: *“I use a motorcycle instead of walking to certain locations because I don’t know the geography of the place. So, I better use a bodaboda than guessing directions.”*

Anonymous: *“When my friends or relatives are available, I use them as a guide while walking. As I walk around with them, am able to feel the environment within the shopping center and as a result master the route so that when someone is not there to help, I can try navigating the market.”*

Anonymous: *“Sometimes when I want to adventure or feel that there are less obstacles to the places I need to go to, I use orientation and mobility skills that I was taught by the Kenya Union for The Blind. This is good as it also helps me to exercise and show the community that I can be independent.”*

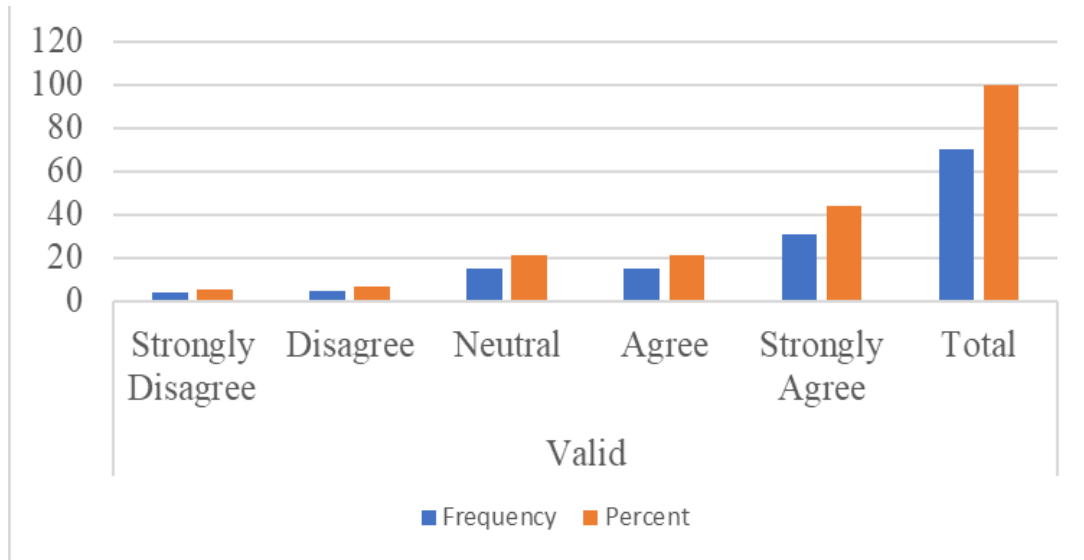


Figure 4.7: I Experience Challenges Moving about Because of my Visual Impairment When Performing my Duties

4.6.4 Shopping as a Gender Role Among the Visually Impaired Women

A key gender role performed by visually impaired women among the Kipsigis is shopping. To perform this role, one has to access stores, which imply other challenges. For Kipsigis women, their visual impairment has meant that they look for strategies to overcome challenges in accessing stores to shop. Results of FGDs showed that visually impaired used a sighted guide in doing their shopping. Similarly, others resort to seeking for assistance from friendly shop attendants as illustrated below;

Anonymous: *“I use a sighted guide as I do my shopping. The sighted assistant helps me to identify the fashion and color of the items like clothes, expiry dates of the goods on the shelves and even the general state of my grocery. You know if you are not careful, these sellers can sell to you rotten tomatoes. If I come with spoilt items at home, it will be disaster and of course wastage money. You see, you have to be very careful.”*

Anonymous: *“I have learnt to create good relationship with shop keepers and other business people within our market so that when am alone, I can ask for help from them. I know they will not sell bad things to a friend. Even if they do, I can always trace them since I know them.”*

4.6.5 Judging Items in Stores in Performance of Gender Roles

Once in stores, it can be noted that visually impaired women still face challenges. These are in terms of judging the quality of items they want to purchase. To overcome this challenge of judgement, results showed that visually impaired women use their sense of feel and touch, rely on trusted friends or family members, or simply wait for referrals. Here are their sentiments from the FGD;

Anonymous: *“I touch and feel the texture of the item I want to purchase. My nose also helps me to know the type of smell I want. I don’t just buy any perfume.”*

Anonymous: *“I rely on a trusted friend or family member as I do my shopping especially when buying items that are expensive. I have to use someone’s eyes. You know I have to do my part as a buyer, or else, I will buy a defective item.”*

Anonymous: *“If I need to buy items like phones, I use referrals like friends. I know if I go to the shop I have been referred to, I will get the same item I saw my friend having.”*

Results showed that visually impaired persons have to overcome certain challenges to identify colors. For example, in order to distinguish between different colors of items on display, visually impaired women either ask for assistance or label items for easy identification. This has been cited by Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019), noting that identifying the colors of items becomes challenging given their visual impairment. Here are some of their sentiments;

Anonymous: *“I ask for assistance from visually abled friends or family members to identify the right colors for me. With my visual disability, I really need to get their opinion.”*

Anonymous: *“In my house, I label items so that I can easily identify them easily. I just have to get things right otherwise my friends will start laughing at me.”*

4.6.6 Cooking as a Gender Role Among the Visually Impaired Women

In meal preparation and cooking, the visually impaired also encounter challenges. Results of the FGD showed that the visually impaired suffer from burns. In the case of using firewood, challenges relate to keeping the flame burning continuously. In other instances, identifying items for cooking such as spices or ingredients for various meals when stored in similar containers is not easy for the visually impaired women. There are also challenges to do with knife cuts when chopping vegetables or ingredients during meal preparation. These challenges have been acknowledged by Jones, Bartlett, & Cooke (2019) in their study, noting that they impact negatively on the performance of gender roles among the visually impaired. From the FGD, these are the sentiments of the visually impaired Kipsigis women from Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County;

Anonymous: *“I get burnt while cooking. Due to my visual disability am burnt when trying to check the boiling water level with my fingers or when trying to get the position of the cooking pot.”*

Anonymous: *“When I’m using firewood, I have challenges lighting the fire. Similarly, I cannot keep the fire burning continuously till the food is cooked because sometimes I don’t usually know when the fire has stopped burning. It is really a problem.”*

Anonymous: *“I experience challenges when it comes to identifying food items such as spices or other ingredients. This is mainly when such items are stored in similar containers.”*

Anonymous: *“I fear knife cuts when I’m cutting onions or chopping vegetables as I prepare meals. So, I have really had to be slow when cutting vegetables.”*

4.6.7 Falls and Knocks in the Performance of Gender Roles

As they encounter difficulties, visually impaired women at times fall or knock themselves as they perform their duties. From the results, it was found that 37.1% agreed whereas 28.6% strongly agreed. Although 25.7% were neutral, only 8.6% disagreed that they at times fell or knocked themselves while in the performance of duties due to their visual impairment. Previous research by Crews, Chou, Stevens, & Saaddine (2016) and Steinman, Nguyen, Pynoos, & Leland (2011) found that difficulties among the visually impaired are attributable to poor infrastructure, resulting in falls as they go about performing their gender roles. As a result of the mobility challenges, the performance of gender roles among visually impaired women is negatively impacted.

Table 4.11: I Sometimes Fall or Knock Myself When Performing My Duties as a Visually Impaired Woman

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	6	8.6
	Neutral	18	25.7
	Agree	26	37.1
	Strongly Agree	20	28.6
Total		70	100.0

4.6.8 Anxiety among visually impaired in the performance of gender roles

Visual impairment is also said to result in anxiety among those affected. Results showed that 38.6% strongly agreed while 27.1% agreed that in the performance of their duties as visually impaired women, they become anxious as illustrated in Figure 4.8. The remaining 14.3% disagreed and 17.1% strongly disagreed on becoming anxious while performing duties as visually impaired women.

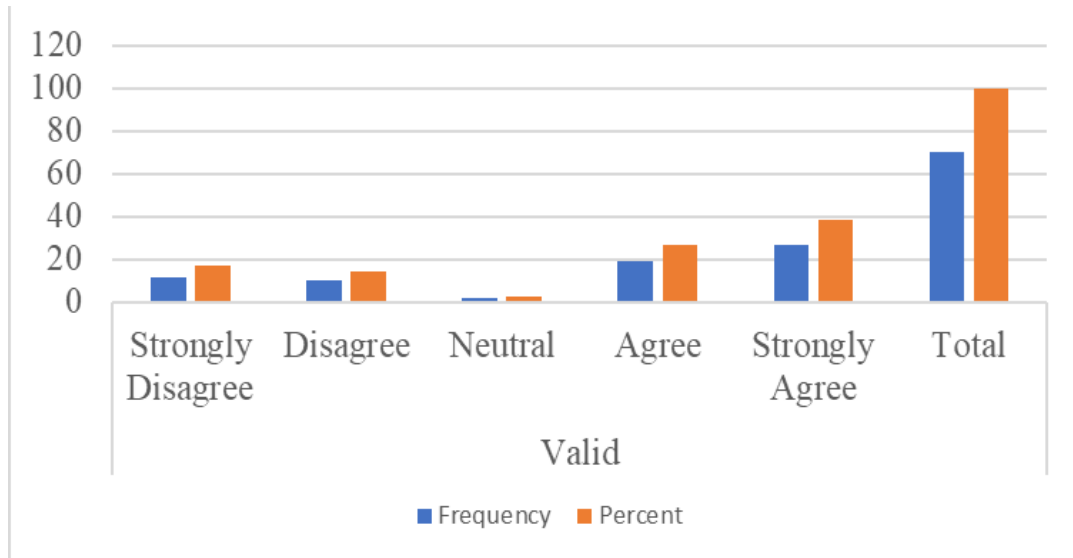


Figure 4.8: In Performing My Duties as a Visually Impaired Woman, I Sometimes become Anxious

4.6.9 Depression among Visually Impaired in The Performance of Gender Roles

Anxiety and depression affect the performance of gender roles among Kipsigis women. In the study, it was established that 22.9% strongly agreed that stress and depression were attributable to visual impairment. Another 38.6% agreed with 18.6% remaining neutral. On the other hand, 14.3% disagreed and 4.3% strongly disagreed as shown in Table 4.12. From this data, it was concluded that depression and anxiety impacted negatively on the performance of gender roles among Kipsigis women.

Table 4.12: In Performing My Duties as a Visually Impaired Woman, I Sometimes become Depressed

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	4.3
	Disagree	10	14.3
	Neutral	13	18.6
	Agree	27	38.6
	Strongly Agree	16	22.9
	Total	69	98.6
	Not answered	1	1.4
Total		70	100.0

4.6.10 Societal Perception of the Visually Impaired

The way society perceives the visually impaired may also be a challenge. This is because such perception may be frustrating among visually impaired women. Study results showed that 42% of visually impaired women strongly agreed that they were frustrated by how society perceived their condition. Similarly, 24.6% of visually impaired women agreed that it was frustrating how society perceives them as shown in Figure 4.9.

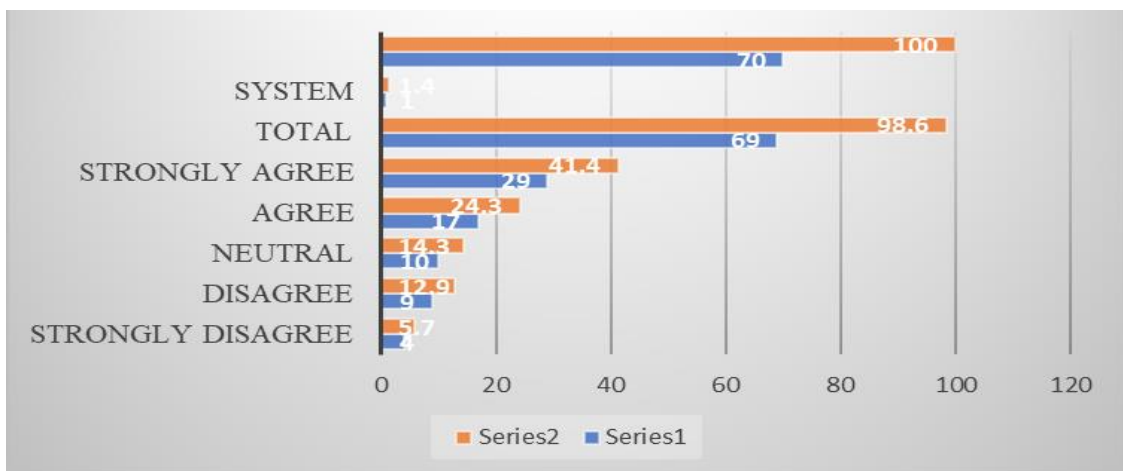


Figure 4.9: My Frustration Is Caused by the Way the Society Considers Me as a Visually Impaired Woman

From the above results, it can be noted that issues relating to anxiety and depression can be termed as mental health problems facing the visually impaired. These have been acknowledged by Kempen, Ballemans, Ranchor, Rens, & Zijlstra (2012) and Demmin & Silverstein (2020), attributing such to the loss of vision and the resulting societal stigma that the visually impaired face. The various mental health issues associated with visual impairment include anxiety, fear, worry, frustration, and embarrassment among others. In severe cases, the visually impaired chose to

withdraw from society, keeping to themselves and away from the rest. van der Aa, Comijs, Penninx, van Rens, & van Nispen (2015) also found that among the visually impaired, mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, especially among the elderly.

4.6.11 Negative Professional Attitude and Performance of Gender Roles

As a result of the perception of society towards the visually impaired, even health professionals have developed negative attitudes towards them. This has seen many keep off health facilities given the fear of these negative attitudes by health professionals (Mahalakshmi & Velusamy, 2018). From the research, it was found that a majority of visually impaired women (34.3% agreed and 28.6% strongly agreed) did not seek assistance for mental health problems. They attribute this to negative attitudes by health professionals towards visual impairment as a condition. For most health professionals, previous research by Mahalakshmi & Velusamy (2018) acknowledges that they perceive visual impairment as a form of functional disability. Such an attitude has meant that the visually impaired prefer to keep away from health professionals even in cases where they are having mental health problems (Mahalakshmi & Velusamy, 2018).

Table 4.13: I Cannot Seek Assistance for My Mental Health Problems because of the Poor Attitudes of Health Professionals towards Visual Impairment

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	11.4
	Disagree	10	14.3
	Neutral	8	11.4
	Agree	24	34.3
	Strongly Agree	20	28.6
Total		70	100.0

4.6.12 Visual Impairment and Social Exclusion

In many families, those with visual impairment face loneliness and seclusion. This is attributable to the fact that many families tend to keep them away from their peers not affected by visual impairment. Research by the Thomas Pocklington Trust (2014) concluded that loneliness and social isolation (seclusion) among the visually impaired are due to difficulties in undertaking daily functional activities (gender roles). In another study by Rokach, Berman, and Rose (2021), loneliness among the visually impaired was attributable to the risk of disability, poor health, low financial status, and difficulties in engaging in social events and performance of roles. Similarly, the issue of loneliness has also been cited in a study by Brunes, Hansen, and Heir (2019) among the visually impaired.

Research by Chu and Chan (2022) concluded that those with visual impairment may be at a greater risk of loneliness. They cite factors like fewer opportunities for learning and building social skills as among those contributing significantly to loneliness among the visually impaired (Chu & Chan, 2022). In many cases, the feeling is that the visually impaired might face rejection, stigma and other negative labels from friends and others in society (Datta & Sabir, 2021). In cases of severe visual impairment, families may be affected financially. For example, Bambara, Wadley, Owsley, Martin, Porter, & Dreer (2009) cite a case where families have to spend considerably due to costs relating to purchasing low-vision devices probably not covered by insurance. This is in order to assist affected members improve their vision, thereby perform their gender roles. Similarly, seeking rehabilitation services may be costly if transportation as to take place to visual impairment rehabilitation appointments. Another impact of visual impairment can be in terms of loss of

wages/earnings when a family member has to take time off to offer necessary assistance to visually impaired women in performance of their gender roles (Bambara et al., 2009). Overall, there are practical, functional, and economic needs that relate to offering assistance to women with visual impairment in performance of their gender roles. Such needs may see family members experience a level of distress as they cope with the new demands. If such demands are in many families, then a community may be negatively affected by loss of their financial wellbeing.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The results of the research were provided in the previous chapter. The findings, conclusions, and suggestions are highlighted in the following sections of this chapter. There are also recommendations on how future scholars can advance the topic based on the findings.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study aimed to assess the implications of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles in the family among Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub County. It was guided by four objectives – establish whether the gender roles assigned to all women are the same ones assigned to women with visual impairment in Ainamoi Sub-County; to find out how visually impaired women cope in performing their gender roles in Ainamoi Sub County; to examine the challenges faced by VI Kipsigis women in the performance of gender roles in Ainamoi Sub County; and to investigate the possible strategies that can be adopted to mitigate the challenges faced by VI women in performing their gender roles.

On the first objective, it was established that as a result of a disability, women in society may fail to perform their duties as per expected standards. In every society, there are gender roles in terms of expectations of what men and women are to do. Of importance is that these roles vary from one society to another. Based on the study, results show that women are mainly assigned house duties. This is because most women stay at home due to their reproductive roles. Another factor in assigning gender roles was the Kipsigis culture. Results indicated that a majority of respondents

agreed that culture was an important factor in assigning gender roles. In Kipsigis culture, women were assigned gender roles such as caregiving and other domestic responsibilities in society.

On the second objective, results showed that visually impaired women face numerous challenges as they perform gender roles. The infrastructure of the area is a major impediment for visually impaired women as they perform their gender roles. This is in terms of the poor terrain in the study area. In the study, many participants noted that because of the poor road network, they encountered challenges as they went about performing their duties. From the study, it was found that participants agreed on experiencing challenges when moving around. To overcome mobility challenges attributable to the poor road network, visually impaired women in Ainamoi Sub County relied on a sighted guide. In addition, visually impaired women used motorcycles and relied on orientation and mobility skills. In other instances, they sought assistance from friendly shop attendants to assist them purchase items needed for their consumption. Despite these coping strategies employed by visually impaired women, they acknowledged that they still experienced challenges like falling or knocking themselves as they went about performing their gender roles. Other challenges that the visually impaired face are mental in nature, reflected through anxiety and depression. This is attributable to society looking down upon them and also the fear that they may not get an assistant when they need to perform their roles.

On objective three, it was found that despite the challenges that visually impaired women face in the performance of their gender roles, they have to find a way of navigating through them. This is to avoid being seen as lazy in the community. To

cope in performance of gender roles amidst the challenges associated with visual impairment, dependence on other people is key. For example, it was found that Kipsigis women depend on friends and close family members so that they can perform their gender roles. Although they offer the necessary assistance as the visually impaired go about performing their gender roles, it was found that many women feel that some friends and family members are overprotective. For some visually impaired women, there is a feeling that the dependence is some sort of burden to those offering the assistance. It implies that it is important to look into how to assist visually impaired women in a manner that does not make them feel that they are overprotected based on their impairment. Similarly, making them feel that they are not a burden to those offering assistance will be critical.

5.3 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to assess the implications of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles in the family among Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County. It is noted that in every society, there are certain roles determined and assigned to individuals on the basis of gender. Although it is expected that everyone participates fully in the performance of their duties, the study notes that visual impairment affects women's ability to perform their expected gender roles. In Ainamoi Sub County of Kericho County, visual impairment is common. As a result of the visual impairment, women's performance of gender roles has been greatly affected. This is attributable to the various challenges that they face as a result of their visual impairment. In many cases, those with disabilities are looked down upon by the rest of society. Similarly, non-performance of gender roles may make one to be seen incomplete or imperfect by the society. As such, those with disabilities such as visual

impairment try as much as possible to cope in performance of their gender roles despite the challenges.

The study finds that gender roles are assigned based on cultural and social factors. From a biological perspective, men and women perform certain roles determined at birth. Culturally, every society has its guidelines on what is deemed feminine and masculine. Based on social factors, men and women are socialized to acknowledge certain roles as they grow. For example, based on personality traits, it was expected that women are accommodative and emotional, unlike men expected to be confident and aggressive. From a personality perspective, society expected women to perform caregiving duties, cooking, and cleaning the house. On the other hand, men were expected to be providers and work in garages, plumbing and other related repairs at home. Nonetheless, in cases of any disabilities, the performance of gender roles is impacted negatively. With a disability like visual impairment, it implies that one is not effective in the performance of their gender role in society. For visually impaired women, the performance of gender roles such as shopping, meal preparation, cooking and washing among others become a challenge. Looking at Ainamoi Sub County, the infrastructure is a key impediment given the poor road network. This has meant that mobility for visually impaired women is significantly affected.

To cope with the challenges, visually impaired women in Ainamoi Sub County rely on others in the performance of their gender roles. For dependence, it was shown that visually impaired women either depend on family members or close friends, as well as caregivers in their performance of their gender roles. Nonetheless, the visually impaired still feel that such support is not enough to cope with challenges in

the performance of their gender roles. They attribute this to the fact that those they depend on to help are at times too overprotective. In other cases, the fact that the support is not remunerated has meant that family or close friends lack the motivation to assist them in the performance of their gender roles. In cases where the help is not forthcoming, the visually impaired have had to come up with strategies to overcome emerging challenges in the performance of their gender roles. In the absence of someone to help, visually impaired women choose to go about their gender roles by arranging items in a manner that they can easily identify. They also label items in the house. To move around and do shopping, they use motorcycles. To shop in stores, they seek assistance from friendly sellers where possible.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Family and Community Level

From the study findings, some recommendations emerge. At the family level, visually impaired persons can be helped to perform their gender roles better if several things are done that will translate to the community level.

The study recommends that family members living with visually impaired persons allow them to perform certain roles regularly. By so doing, the visually impaired will get used to such, thereby enhancing their capability to cope with any challenges. This will help in making them independent.

It is also recommended that family members of visually impaired persons ensure they maintain a specific arrangement of items in the house. For example, furniture and other household goods have to be in a specific location so that the visually impaired

can get used to that order. In this way, the visually impaired persons will find it easier to cope with the environment when performing their duties.

Given that visual impairment limits one's ability to perform their gender roles, it will be important that family members keep motivating them. This is vital in ensuring that the visually impaired are not discouraged even in cases where their performance of gender roles is not up to the expectation of family members.

It will be important that families living with visually impaired persons do not get tired of giving them instructions especially in cases where they perform tasks that do not meet the expectations of other family members. Of importance is for family members to feel free and make necessary corrections so that the visually impaired get inspired as they perform their gender roles.

To perform their roles as required, especially when it comes to assisting the visually impaired as they go about their duties, relevant guidance to family members will be vital. Thus, it is recommended that family members at the community level are sensitized and educated on how to assist the visually impaired. This can be achieved by engaging community-based rehabilitation officers, orientation and mobility experts as well as reading materials on the rehabilitation and habilitation of the blind which can be acquired from organizations and institutions of the visually impaired that are situated in Kericho and the Country at large. Such training focus on how to help the visually impaired perform household chores, do shopping, orientation and mobility and how to associate with community. This will ensure that the community appreciate

the visually impaired as a group that requires assistance and hence no need to see them as a burden in their daily engagements.

5.4.2 Businesses and Organizations

At the business level, the visually impaired can better perform their gender roles if there is provision of assistance when such is needed. For example, such assistance can go a long way in helping the visually impaired identify items they want to buy. Similarly, clearing pathways in stores or markets can go a long way to help the visually impaired perform their gender roles. The significance of this is in ensuring the visually impaired can easily move from one store to another without encountering difficulties.

5.4.3 Governments; County and National

The county and national governments can also play a critical role in helping the visually impaired in the performance of their gender roles. It is recommended that the two levels of government make public places more accessible. This is to facilitate mobility of the visually impaired persons in public places in the performance of their gender roles.

It will also be important that both county and national governments put up relevant infrastructure for mobility. For example, findings show that there is a poor road network in parts of Ainamoi Sub County that has posed a mobility challenge to the visually impaired. It is recommended that the County Government of Kericho works closely with the national government to build a good road network that has pedestrian walks which will go a long way in facilitating smooth navigation for the visually impaired as they perform their gender roles.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

The aim of the study was to assess the implications of visual impairment on the performance of gender roles in the family among Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County. Given that men also have specific gender roles assigned to them, it will be recommended that future researchers examine how those with visual impairment go about their roles.

The research concentrated on those with visual impairment. Further research could also be explored on how other forms of disabilities affect the performance of gender roles in the community.

Specific research should also be conducted to establish how gender roles and disability interact in formal sectors like employment and education.

Similar research should also be conducted to establish how other communities handle gender issues in the context of disability

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APPENDICES**Appendix I: Letter of Introduction to Respondents**

Dear Participants,

RE: GATHERING OF DATA BY DENIS MOTURI

I am Dennis Nyariki Moturi, Admission Number C50/KER/2505/2013. A master's program student at Kenyatta University. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Degree of **MASTERS OF GENDER DEVELOPMENT STUDIES OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**, am undertaking a study project on *the implications of visual impairment on gender roles in Ainamoi Sub- County*. You have been chosen to take part in this research. I respectfully ask that you complete the attached questionnaire to help me gather data. The supplied data will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic reasons.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

DENIS NYARIKI MOTORI**C50/KER/2505/2013**

Appendix II: Research Instruments

Questionnaire

Instructions

Please respond to all the questions by selecting the correct box or completing the areas given.

SECTION A: BIO-DATA

Indicate your choice by putting a tick () on the statements provided

- 1) Age
 - A. 18 – 25 years
 - B. 26 – 35 years
 - C. 36 – 45 years
 - D. 46 – 55 years
 - E. Above 55 years

- 2) Are you married?
 - Yes
 - No

SECTION B: GENDER ROLES

In the table below, indicate how much you concur or dissent with each of the statements regarding the gender roles assigned to Kipsigis women in Ainamoi Sub-County.

1-Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

S/NO	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	In my community, my roles are determined at birth					
2	Women are mainly assigned housework					
3	Housework fits women because the majority are not in formal employment					
4	Disabilities like visual impairments determine assigned roles					
5	My culture determines gender roles I'm assigned as a visually impaired woman					
6	As a visually impaired woman, I still have to perform					

	caregiving & domestic responsibilities					
7	I have been socialized as a visually impaired woman to believe that men and women in my community perform certain gender roles					
8	My community expects me to perform certain roles as a visually impaired woman					

SECTION C: VI & COPING MECHANISM

In the table below, indicate how much you concur or dissent with each of the statements regarding the way visually impaired women cope in the performance of gender roles in Ainamoi Sub-County.

1-Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

S/NO	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	Due to my visual impairment, my performance of my roles as a woman is greatly affected					
2	I depend on my family members in the performance of my gender roles as a woman					
3	I depend on my friends to perform my gender roles as a woman					
4	As a result of my dependence on others (family members/friends), I perform my gender roles as a woman better					
5	I do not depend on anyone to perform my gender roles as a visually impaired woman					

• SECTION D: CHALLENGES

In the table below, indicate how much you concur or dissent with each of the statements regarding the difficulties encountered by visually impaired women in carrying out their duties in Ainamoi Sub-County.

1-Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

S/NO	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
1	I experience difficulties when performing my duties as A visually impaired woman					
2	As a result of the poor road network, I encounter challenges as I go about performing my duties					
3	I experience challenges moving about because of my visual impairment when performing my duties					
4	I cannot move around easily when performing my duties as a visually impaired woman					
5	I sometimes fall or knock myself when performing my duties as a woman					
6	In performing my duties as a visually impaired woman, I sometimes become anxious					
7	In performing my duties as a visually impaired woman, I sometimes become depressed					
8	My frustration is caused by the way the society considers me as a visually impaired woman					
9	It is frustrating when performing my gender roles given my visual impairment					
10	I cannot seek assistance for my mental health problems because of the poor attitudes of health professionals towards visual impairment					

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) Schedule

1. In your opinion, do you think society consider disabilities such as VI when assigning gender roles?
2. Do you ever feel that the VI should be exempt from performing gender roles?
3. How does a visually impaired woman go about performing her duties as assigned by the community in the absence of someone to offer assistance?

4. Do you think the support you receive at the family is enough to help you cope as a visually impaired woman in performing your duties?
5. Given the poor road network, how do you go about performing your duties as a visually impaired?
6. Are there any infrastructural support to assist the VI in shopping in this area?
(Be it in supermarkets, local groceries, butchers, local markets)
7. How do you access stores/get into stores?
8. How do you distinguish color of items you buy?
9. While shopping, do you get any assistance in reading labels, signage and receipts?
10. As a VI person, how do you judge the quality of items you want to buy?
11. What challenges do you encounter in meal preparation/cooking?
12. What do you think can be done at the family level to help you as a VI person to perform your duties?
13. What can businesses do to limit challenges you encounter when shopping as a VI person?
14. At the county and national government level, what can be done to help you as VI persons in performance of your gender roles?

Appendix III: Location of Kericho County in Kenya



Prepared by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Cartography/GIS Section

This map is not an authority or description of boundaries


Appendix VI: Research Permit (NACOSTI)

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Ref No: 133332

RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Mr. Dennis Nyariki Muturi of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research in Kericho on the topic: Influence of Visual Impairment on the Performance of Gender Roles among Kipsigis Women in Alnamol, Kericho County for the period ending : 01/September/2023.

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