

# Innovations

## Exploring the Lived Experiences of Students with Visual Impairment in Durbete Preparatory and Secondary School

**Melese Smachew Gedf**

Department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Debre Tabor University  
Debre Tabor, Ethiopia

**Corresponding author: Melese Smachew Gedf**

---

---

### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to assess the lived experiences of students with visual impairment in Durbete Preparatory and Secondary school. Eight Comprehensively selected students with visual impairment were participated. Qualitative approach with phenomenology research design was employed. Observation, interview and document review guide were used to collect data and data was analyzed using Interpretative phenomenology analysis technique. The findings showed that SWVI feel sad, demotivated and low self-image since they are being visual impaired. SWVI, worried, afraid, missed direction, and never got outside the class after entered to the class once. Most of the learners do not get proper care from their parents. Almost all students with visual impairment do not participate in competitive games and go with their visual impaired peers. The society has no positive attitude towards persons with visual impairment. Majority of SWVI believed that they have some acceptance by their family and teachers. Parental and teacher support for SWVI is low. Most of the participants do not have enough knowledge and skills about Braille and they do not read written in Braille. SWVI need special support at home and school. Supply of educational materials for SWVI is too low. There is no mobility and orientation training to SWVI in the study area. Geography, economics and English subjects are difficult for SWVI. SWVI prefer to learn in boarding or special school. The class rooms are not comfortable for students with visual impairment. SWVI uses problem coping mechanism typically tolerance and resistance including participate in social aspects. Therefore, the study recommends that regular teachers in the integrated school should have supported these students by providing appropriate learning materials. In addition, regular school should know the importance of teachers and parents support for educational development of SWVI. It is better to integrate students with visual impairment not only physically, but they should be fully included socially and educationally.*

**Key words:** 1. lived experience, 2. visual impairment, 3. phenomenology, 4. coping strategy.

---

---

### **Introduction**

Vision provides wealth of context or learning and interpreting information as well as it plays an important role in day to day activities. Vision impairment often leads to a lack of context and impedes the development of cognitive skills (Gothwal, Lovie- Kitchin and Nutheti, 2003). In addition to this, children with limited vision, have fewer opportunities to explore their world. Usually, people with visual impairments are routinely face significant challenges in their daily lives such as recognizing objects and people, mobility, reading difficulties, effective socialization and taking care of their daily living skills.

The World Report on Disability shows that about a billion people, including children with visual impairment (approximately 15%) of the world's population live with some form of disability (WHO and World Bank, 2011). The report notes the disproportional effects have on disability rather than people without disabilities particularly children with visual impairment, those living in the poorest wealth quintile of the world's population from lower income countries.

Psychologists, social workers, educationists and rehabilitation experts in the field of special education are becoming more concerned in the academic achievement of students in various subject areas especially for students with visual impairment and the factors responsible for such performance. In order to ensure that students with visual impairment achieve better educational outcomes, professionals in the field of visual impairment deem it important to understudy certain factors such as psychological and social acceptance which affect or facilitate their academic achievement (McGrath, 2002).

Hence, particularly, students with visual impairment in Durbete preparatory and secondary school are vulnerable to educational and psychosocial problems. During practicum field of professional support when I was work in Durbete Woreda, I have observed indicators of some problems of social isolation, absence of test room, difficult physical environment and inadequate educational materials are encounter visual impairment students. In addition to this, from my experience in the study area, students with visual impairment participate in teaching and learning process, but little or no attention is paid to the impact of certain factors that may affect their academic achievement. Therefore, this study was, initiated to explore the lived experience of visual impairment students in Durbete preparatory and Secondary School.

### **Statement of the problem**

Students with visual impairment in secondary schools and other institutions of learning can be enhanced/or marred by several factors such as their significant personal feeling or self-concept and social acceptance among others. Self-concept is the accumulation of knowledge about the self which provides the opportunity for the individual to understand the relationship between the self and their social world. Studies have confirmed that children and adolescents with visual impairment begin to integrate social information into their own self-concept in elementary schools by assessing their position among their peers. These activities affect children's behaviour thereby impacting on their academic achievement in schools.

The researcher was conducting preliminary assessment in the study area. According to preliminary assessment and documents of Durbete Woreda education sector, even though visual impairment students participate in teaching and learning process, they face the following problems. Those problems encounter visual impairment students in the study area are lack of special training, unavailability of educational materials, inadequate guidance and library services, difficulty of getting enough information on different subjects, problems related to mobility, unwilling teachers, a lack of communication amongst important role-players, late course material and/or headaches and muscle tension from the effort of reading with limited sight, low academic achievement, social disparity, discrimination, stigmatization, neglect and isolation and depending on the information from this school and also my review, no anyone try to conduct in this area.

Thus, children with visual impairment would face psychological, social and mental developmental challenges through his/her life. Farrell (1990) also indicated that Visual impairment will affect child's social, emotional, language, cognitive development, and mobility and orientation skills. The combinations of all these effects have an impact on the Psychosocial and academic functioning potential of students with visual impairment. These actually inspired me to closely examine the issue under investigation. Therefore, taking the gaps into account, this study was try to assess the conceptual variables such as, psychological experiences, social experiences, academic experiences and experiences of problem coping strategies. By taking those gaps into consideration the researcher intended to explore the lived experiences of students with visual impairment in this preparatory and

Secondary School to answer the following questions.

1. What are the psychological experiences of students with visual impairment in this preparatory and secondary school?
2. What are the social experiences of visual impairment students in this preparatory and secondary school?
3. What are the academic experiences of students with visual impairment in this preparatory and secondary school?
4. What coping strategies do students with visual impairment employed in this preparatory and secondary school as related to psychological, social and academic experiences?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to explore the lived experiences of students with visual impairment in Durbete preparatory and Secondary school.

The Specific Objectives were to:

1. To examine the Psychological experience of students with visual impairment in this preparatory and secondary school.
2. To explore the Social experiences of students with visual impairment in this preparatory and secondary school.
3. To identify the academic experiences of students with visual impairment in this preparatory and secondary school.
4. To find out the experience of problem coping strategies in this preparatory and secondary school as related to educational, psychological and social experiences of student with visual impairment.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study can benefit participant of this study by providing clear understanding about the lived experiences, of visual impairment students having a full understanding of their lived experiences may help the study participant to peruse their dreams and reach their full potential. The logical bases of this study have been providing the opportunity for the students with visual impairment in Durbete preparatory and Secondary School to describe their feelings about the lived experience. Following, an understanding about the lived experiences of students with visual impairment may help other professionals, special needs expert, community based rehabilitation workers, concerned government sectors and the other researchers to increase knowledge and plan to provide services to meet the multidimensional needs of students with visual impairment.

Therefore, this study is believed to be important by suggesting data-supported recommendations for the school to take appropriate educational intervention. This would improve service delivery for PWVI and may bring changes in creating a welcoming environment. It is also hoped that based on the result of this study, this preparatory and secondarySchool will work diligently to provide suitable psychosocial and educational services. Moreover, the current study is believed to contribute at least few of those needy areas of the issue through provoking those potential researchers and providing them with basic and preliminary information on subject under study.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

Conceptually, the study was delimited to assess the lived experiences of students with visual impairment in Durbete preparatory and Secondary School. However, because of time, finance and other constraints it was difficult to cover all secondary schools and not include. So, the target population of this research were delimited only visual impairment students in Durbete preparatory and Secondary School.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The design of this study was phenomenological research design. Also this study, Qualitative approach type was employed. The rationale for using as Creswell(2007) emphasised we conduct qualitative research, when we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue, which can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes, or places of work

### **Population and Sampling Techniques**

The data sources of this study were students with visual impairment (SWVI) from 9 to 12 grades. Therefore, to select participants from the target population non-probability sampling techniques were employed. Choose the school purposively it have resource centre, there are more visual impairment students who are faced experience of psychosocial and academically challenges and they housed all the students with visual impairment more than from the other secondary schools within their districts. And also, researcher employed comprehensive sampling technique for SWVI. Because of was taken all of 5, Female and 3, Males total 8 students with visual impairment respectively.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

For this study the researcher used three types of data gathering instruments such as, semi structured interview; for SWVI, observation; for observing classroom instruction, physical environment, lesson and learner observation and documentary review analysis;. Among these, observation is conducted with the help of school guidance and counsellor by providing orientation training about each observation check lists.

### **Interview**

15 Interview questions were employed to gather dependable data from students with visual impairments. The rationale for using this tool was to obtain an in-depth experience about the problem within discussion. Moreover, they have in different positions related to the lived experience of students with visual impairment regarding to main study concepts such as, Psychosocial, academic and problem coping mechanism experiences of Visual Impairment students.

### **Observation**

Observations were held, using participatory noticed observation checklist, and over a period that the research location to assess the natural setting where integrated teaching was practiced. The school environment was also observed to assess whether it was supportive to addressing the needs of students with visual impairments. In line with this idea the researcher conducted lesson, classroom, and learner's observation.

### **Document Analysis**

Document analysis was also used as an instrument to see how they lived experience of students with visual impairment and in order to make the research reliable and comprehensive. Due to this, learning activities designed for continuous system; Continuous assessment results of the students with visual impairments and Accumulative academic result (roster) of the students with visual impairment were taken as sources of information for this study.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The procedure follows for data collection have the following steps with the aim of ensuring the legal and ethical nature of research which was very crucial for the successful completion of this study. In this study, the data will collect in the natural setting. Before collecting the data, permission is asked from the school administrations and the school recorder to gain access to the teachers and to obtain relevant academic information on nine to twelve grade classrooms. The process of data collection was done by taking note and tape

recording to collect the data more completely and objectively via the schedules. Further, the major issues of the data collection schedule are covered by sequenced theme, views and understanding are taken as predominant are as that enabled the researcher her to grasp relevant information about the psychosocial and educational experience of SWVI.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Based on the nature of the research questions; the data that were collected from the informants coded, classified, organized and interpreted. The data obtained through interview, observation and document review were analyzed by using interpretative analysis technique. Because of the study used qualitative type of data, Interpretative phenomenology data analysis technique was employed to analyse the qualitative data.

### **Ensuring the Trustworthiness of Data**

In qualitative research, the researcher maybe biased in the collection and interpretation of data. Therefore, there should be techniques to confirm the credibility of findings (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, in order to confirm the accuracy of the data, the researcher used the following strategies: Expert judgment: I consulted persons having experience on the topic. Their professional involvements occur throughout the study, during the interview transcription, emerging categories from those transcripts and the final report. Exploration of Major Challenges and coping mechanisms of students with visual impairment. Data triangulation: Since the sources of information in this study were interview, observation and document analysis triangulation have been applied as a major means for validating the study. Note taking and have taken notes. The points that researcher observed are write based on the observation checklist. Note taking may be done before, during and after interviews. In addition to this, the study was done member checking and receiving feedback by submitting the Narratives back to the participants. Finally, researcher remains neutral and non-judgmental during data collection.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Psychological experiences**

#### **Feeling about being Visually Impaired**

Almost all of them replied that, they have feeling of inferiority and depression due to their inability to do activities like visual peers. Some of them also said that they are depressed since they were neglected by the society in social aspect on the basis of their visual disability. Habtamu said that, "I feel nothing since I am visual impaired, rather the effect of visual impairment on socioeconomic and personal problems degrades my self-esteem, self-confidence, and sometimes I complain God as he created me mistakenly." My observation also indicates that most of them are in feeling in the class due to their visual impairment. For instance, they never participate and remains passive, never ask questions and no class room social interaction in general. In short, there is Psychological feeling of SWVI about being visually impaired.

#### **Attending New School**

One interviewee said that, "I feel fear when I enter to school for the first times since students and teachers, and the environment by itself, are new for us." Habtamu added that "when I came to school for the first time, I confused greatly." Melaku, Kasaw and wubamlak expressed it in a similar manner with a slightly different word like:

*When I came to school for the first time, I worried, afraid, confused, missed direction, did not enter to class as well as I never enter in to the office of director and vice director's whatever problem I faced. In addition, I did not communicate with students as well as Teachers in the school compass and outside the school. In ever expect that I will complete my education because I believed that it is impossible to learn with visual impairment at the binging, but sometime later I became hopeful to accomplish my education.*

Tigist on her behalf said that, "When I came to school for the first time, I worried, afraid, confused, missed direction, and never got outside the class after I entered to the class once."

In general, worried, afraid, confused, missed direction, and never got outside the class after entered to the class once, did not communicate with students as well as teachers. The researcher in his observation also confirms that not only to attend school for the first time even those who came from Waleign Mekonen are not socially interactive as those who stay there.

## **Social Experiences**

### **Parental proper Care**

More than half of the interviewee replied that we never got proper protection from our parents. Let's see detail of their response. Habtam said, "Apart from forcing me to stay at home mostly, no proper protection from my parents. I have evidences for instance; they never consult how to protect myself from sexual harassment. But, Like said, "My parents send crop and related necessary materials, protect me from any attack." Sintayehu also added that, "since my parents were died, my caregivers never see me as their own children and no proper protection from them."

Similarly, wubamlak reported that,

*My parents gave me proper care. For example, even though I have born in rural area of Durbete Woreda, when I faced visual impairment my father took me to Addis Ababa and he greatly attempt to send me to Boarding school and finally he succeeds and I started my first class in 'Sebeta' "*

Kasaw said that, at my age of child, the society advice my uncle to remove me to outside, he resists and grow me. The researcher in his observation confirm that, there is no over protection for SWVI from their parents. For instance, no one follow whether their children reach at school safely or not, does not check where they rented, and the like. To generalize, most of the learners do not get over protection from their parents, but some of them got over protection from their parents.

### **Attitude of the Society towards Persons with Visual Impairment**

Out of eight interviewees, seven of them reported that, "we perceive that the society have negative attitude as full citizenship towards persons with visual impairment. Kasaw said that:

*Except my family and some teachers as well as educated peoples others do not count as a citizen in my local area. Let's take evidence: none of them perceive that person with visual impairment can manage and lead country, can teach as sighted peers, and the like.*

But Habtam said that the society have positive attitude as full citizenship towards persons with visual impairment or me. To sum up, the societies have no positive attitude for people with visual impairment. This difference may be due to variation in living areas which are around Towns and sub Towns or in rural area where there is difference in educational status. Generally, the societies have no positive attitude as full citizenship towards persons with visual impairment

### **Acceptance of SWVI by Family, Society and Teachers**

Half of the interviewer believed that they have no acceptance by the society and teachers. For example, wubamlak and Melakusaid word by word that, "I have good acceptance by my families but not by others. Even my acceptance by teachers is partial because they do not understand and know my ability and needs." Similarly, Tigist added that "I have acceptance by teachers a little bit but no by others."

Like reported that "I have full acceptance by my teachers and families but not by majority of other societies. "But Habtamu said that "I have acceptance by my teachers and my families but I have no acceptance by majority of the society. "In contrary, Sintayehu and Habtam reported the same idea that "I have acceptance by my family, teachers and the whole society in my local area." All in all, we can say that majority of them believed that we have acceptance by our family and partially by teachers.



### **Believe of the Society about Cause of Blindness**

There are different believe about cause of blindness in our society. According to the report of some interviewees, the society believed that the causes for blindness are lack of personal hygiene, parents follow up and control problem, anger of God, “mich , Ergiman” as factor of heredity. Sintayehu added that they believed that it is caused by sin of parents, work of God, “*Yebetteb/Wqabi and related issues*.”

In general, the society believed differently concerning to cause of blindness and mostly is believed that it is caused by “mich ,“Ergiman”, as factor of heredity, sin of parents, work of God, anger of God. But few educated one believed that it is caused by lack of personal hygiene, parents follow up and control.

### **Attempts of School Community to Solve Problem of SWVI**

Almost half of the interviewees replied, “We don’t get help from the school community.” One of the learners added that “apart from talking, nothing is done on visual impaired students in the school. For instance, no tutorial program for us, never facilitate reader man or women, no one assigned as direction guider. “ButHabtamu, Wubamlak, Like reported similar idea that “I have got assistance and help from the school community.” Tigist said that even though it is not satisfactory, I have got help and assistance from school community.”

Not only in the school, we face numerous challenges from the society also like discrimination in social aspect, involuntary to show direction when we miss roads, belittle us, ignore us from different games, home renters are not voluntary to rent us in their home. In summary, the school community do not solve problem of SWVI and similarly they face a problem of discrimination from the society like from home renters.

## **Educational Experiences**

### **Regarding Different Professionals Visiting**

In relation to this all learners reported the same idea that,

*I never visited by qualified teachers and parents till now. They never share their experience in teaching learning process. Rather some parents may come to school when the school calls for students and parents conference and never remember and Suggest comment regarding to visual impaired students in them conference.*

One interviewee added that, “I have a great ambition to discuss on different issues with different professional, but no qualified teachers and parents visited me.” To summarize, SWVI do not visited by qualified teachers and parents and did not discuss on different issues concerning to visual impairment and educational aspect. As a result, they demotivated for educational activity.

### **Teachers’ Teaching Methodology**

All of the learners except the one have similar idea. Their opinion is that “I think teachers do not get training on how to teach students with visual impairments, but some of them have teaching experience. Few of them try to teach us orally, but most of them do not care about us and mostly busy to write on the board only. ’This learner’s claim was confirmed by observation of the researcher that, the teacher is not trained in teaching of students with visual impairments. The best evidences for this are the teacher redundantly said that do you see? Look, have you ever seen and related words as well as he/she never consider visual impaired students when he/ she design learning objectives.

Almost all of the learners said that they prefer student centered teaching method. Like added that, in case of student centered, our peers help and guide us slowly, we ask them freely than the teacher, and But, Habtamu said that, “ I prefer teacher centered teaching learning approach because no one disturb me while the teacher teaches where as in student centered, the teacher gives us a certain activity to perform, students may disturb and I never listen them properly. “Researcher observation also prove that student centered teaching learning approach is

suitable for students with visual impairment because they show active participation. In general, majority of SWVI prefer student centered teaching method. But all of the teachers do not get training on how to teach SWVI in Durbete secondary and preparatory school.

### **Parental and Teachers Support**

All of the learners in the study area reported that their parents and teachers do not work with them. Sintayehu, said that as a result, it affects my achievement in education, degraded my motivation and attitude to learn. Kasaw, Tigistand Habtamu added that absence of moral support from parents and teachers, lack of incentives and counseling service affects my learning ability. In contrary, wubamlak said that, my parents and teachers do not work with me but I never face challenges.

Apart from this, all learners except the one reported that, no neighbors and peers who assistance us to achieve academic success. Kasaw said that, "my neighbors and peer shave got different assistance from their parents and peers at different time as much as possible, but they ignore me and even I assigned in their group to do group work, they do themselves instead of invite me to participate in the activity outside the school.

In contrary, wubamlak said that, "there are a number of students and employees who help me in academic success as neighbor and peer." She added that, "they assist me in reading hard copy, writing assignment, and motivate me. So, it is possible that, my academic success was in doubt without their intervention. "Not only peers and neighbors, should teachers also assist visual impaired students in different ways. Concerning to this, five of the learners reported the same ides that," they do not get assistance from teachers at school." The researcher observation shows that, tutorial program of the school does not include students with visual impairment, no tutorial given to students with visual impairment. To sum up, parental and teacher support is low in the study school.

### **SWVI's Challenges of Reading and Writing Competences**

Out of eight interviewees five of them said that, "we do not have enough knowledge and skills about Braille." But three of them replied that "we have knowledge and skills about Braille but it may not be possible to say enough."

Out of eight learners, seven of them expressed similar idea concerning to ability to read Braille equally with their sighted friends who can read by print reader. Kasaw said that:

*I cannot read Braille as fast as my sighted friends who can read by print reader. Because, I read via touching each and every alphabet but my sighted friends use their eyes as a means to read hardcopy. In addition, I do not read and write Braille most of the time.*

On the other hand Habtam said that, "I can read Braille as fast as my sighted friends who read hard copy because I can use my fingers in place of eyes to read while my sighted friends use their eyes as primary tool to read a particular document." The researcher also observed that, students with visual impairment have no uniform knowledge and skills about Braille and most of them do not have enough knowledge and skills about Braille. Apart from this, they do not read Braille as fast as their sighted friends who read hard copy. To sum up, most of students with visual impairment do not have enough knowledge and skills about Brailleas well as they do not read Braille as fast as their sighted friends who read hard copy.

### **Understand Non-verbal forms of Communication**

Sine languages like gesture, nodding head, show direction with fingers and the like are difficult for SWVI to understand.

Habtam said that teachers knowingly or unknowingly use nonverbal forms of communication and also the society in general uses it outside the school. But I cannot understand it unless I ask my intimate peers and relatives to express



in smart words. Habtamu, Melakuand Like, added that “they have no option to understand nonverbal forms of communication except asking to express in words.” The researcher in his observation also checked that SWVI have no option to understand nonverbal forms of communication unless teachers express it in orally.

### **Support Need at School and Home**

Students with visual impairment need special support at school and home. Regarding to this Wubamlak and Tigist have similar idea that, “they need books written by Braille, recorder, library for students with visual impairment, assistant reader man but they are not available except the last one.” Habtam added that, “I need all necessary home furniture at home and all necessary educational materials. However, I am not lucky to fulfill such necessary materials at this stage”.

Like said that,

I need a number of materials and furniture. But the most essential are: radio, uniform, recorder, Braille paper, and slate, stylus, and ken/direction indicators. However, I have got Braille paper more or less from the school and others are not commonly provided by the school and other concerned body.

As the researcher observation confirms that SWVI need books written by Braille, recorder, library for students with visual impairment, assistant reader man, slate, stylus, and ken /direction indicators at home and school. But availability of these is low. All in all, SWVI needs special support at home and school.

### **Educational Material Supply**

All of the learners have similar response concerning to material supply like, brail, slate, stylus from the school. Detail of their response looks like: Tigist revealed that,

*Yes, I have got educational materials from the school like, Braille writer/ Braille paper. But it is not sufficient to run our day to day educational activity smoothly for instance, few of my friends have no ken/direction indicator at all and even those who have do not use that direction indicator since they broke it because they use it for long. It is unthank able to get recorder from the school from the office. When we ask them, they replied that, we have only one or two recorders so take it in group and your group will be risk taker. But after taking it someone makes it his/her own Property and never share with each other.*

The researcher also checked that SWVI came to school without stationary materials like Braille, slate, stylus. It indicates lack of these materials in the school. In general, supply of educational materials for SWVI is too low in the study school.

### **Mobility and Orientation Training**

Regarding to mobility and orientation training, all of the learners’ express similar idea. Their idea looks like as follows:

Like said that,

*I need mobility and orientation training not only when I enter to school for first time, but also before I enter to school and even when I change school because the school environment will be new to me. However, there was an attempt in Boarding school for beginner students only and is not common in schools where inclusive education is provided.*

Wubamlak also added that “in spite of having a number of gullies, piece of wood, steel, broken tables and chairs in the school, no one provides mobility orientation training in this school.” In short there is no mobility and orientation training in the study area.

### **Subject Difficulty**

Habtam, Eshetu and Sintayehu said that, since they don't know meanings of words, English subject is difficult to them. But for Tig, Mele, and Wubamlak, geography is difficult subject because there are chapters that need visual aspect like map reading, and population data and graph, color, distance. Habtamu added that since there are a number of geographies in economics that needs sight it is difficult for me. Like said that, "both geography and English are difficult to me." The researcher in his observation confirms that Geography, economics and English are difficult for SWVI.

### **Comparing special Schools and Regular Schools**

Kasaw, Sintayehu, Habtam, Habtamu Mele said that, they prefer special school than regular school because I get all necessary supports in special school than regular one. Mele and Tigist added that, all necessary materials are available there, teachers are well trained for us purposely, the school environment is conducive for us and we prefer special school. But Wubamlak reported that "I prefer to learn in regular school because, I have peers that help me in reading, writing and leading. In general much of SWVI prefer to learn in boarding or special school.

### **Classroom Accommodation**

Habtamu, Habtam and wubamlak said that,

*The room is not comfortable for us because tables and chairs arranged haphazardly and affect free movement for visual impaired students in us school. Teachers allowed other students to seat in front of us and we obliged to seat at the back side where sound of the teacher is not listenable.*

In addition, Kasaw said that, "class rooms are not easily accessible and there are different obstacles along ways of the class like, small water sewerage canals, broken chairs and tables." Sintayehu said that not only class room, but the school compass in general is not constructed in such a way that supports visual impairment students. Melaku said that "the problem I understand is that teaching method of the teachers doesn't address individual need of students with visual impairment but not class room safety and seating." Learners reported that there are different challenges to learn in the class. Regarding to this almost all of the learners have similar outlook. Habtam said that, "students ignore me in group work, teachers give tests in the class with sighted peers without any precondition, taking note from teacher lecture, forced to take notes from black board written note."

Liku added that, "I faced challenges to learn in the class by student's class room disturbance, fragmentation of periods, individual assignment, and problem to understand concepts with picture." The researcher in his observation also checked that, teachers from natural science assigned as examiners for students with visual impairment, give quiz with sighted peers, do not consider students with visual impairment when they provide assignments, teachers do not read what they wrote on the board for blind students. Beside to this, the class room is not suitable for free movement of students with visual impairment. In general, the class room in the study area is not comfortable for students with visual impairment and students face challenges in the class from class room environment and teaching learning process.

### **Experience of problem coping Strategies of Students with visual impairment**

There are different mechanisms that SWVI use to cope with the problems they face in their life. All of the learners expressed it in similar but slightly different words. Concerning to this Wubamlak said that, "I am using tolerance, resistance and believe to become of the most intellectual person in the future for difficulties I face in my day to day activity. Tigist added that," I use spiritual strength that I have learned from different voluntarism associations and individuals. "Like on her behalf said that "to cope with psychosocial and educational challenges I use mechanisms like telling to my teachers frankly, rethink that it will pass, stay at home and with visual impaired peers for social problem."

Habtamu reported that:

*I cope with psychological challenges by consult my senior peers and teachers. For social challenges I deeply integrate with the society and show by doing not by talking as well as become influential in all aspects. I cope with educational challenges with mechanism that I beg my peers to read hard copy and teachers to revise what I did not understand and writing what they teach and read for me on barillas well as read it repeatedly.*

In general, SWVI cope with different coping mechanism typically tolerance and resistance including participate in social aspect

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

The study indicated that there is Psychological feeling of SWVI about being visually impaired. SWVI worried, afraid, confused, missed direction, and never got outside the class after I entered to the class once, did not communicate with students as well as teachers. Most of the learners do not get proper care from their parents, but some of them got proper care/ protection from their parents. Students with visual impairment faces discrimination to play competitive game in the study area based on being visual impaired.

The societies have no positive attitude towards people with visual impairment in the study area or Durbete Woreda. The society believed differently concerning to cause of blindness and mostly is believed that it is caused by “mich, “Ergiman”, as factor of heredity, sin of parents, work of God, anger of God. But few educated one believed that it is caused by lack of personal hygiene, parents follow up and control. The school community do not help to solve problem of SWVI and similarly they face a problem of discrimination from the society like from home renters.

SWVI do not visited by qualified teachers and parents and did not discuss on different issues concerning to visual impairment and educational aspect. As a result, they demotivated for educational activity. *Majority of SWVI prefer student centered teaching method.* But all of the teachers do not get training on how to teach SWVI in Durbete preparatory and secondary school. Most of students with visual impairment do not have enough knowledge and skills about braille as well as they do not read braille as fast as their sighted friends who read hard copy.

Visual impaired students miss a lot of information and concepts compared to sighted peers since sighted students' use both hearing and looking at the same time but blind students use only hearing as the only instrument to grasp information. Majority of learners have similar ideas that they have equal language ability with sighted friends. The class room in the study area is not comfortable for students with visual impairment and students face challenges in the class from class room environment and teaching learning process.

### Recommendations

Based on results of the study and conclusion given above, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- SWVI needs proper care protection from their parents and the whole community. So, the society should share psychological, educational and social problems of SWVI and solve before it harms Socio economic and psychological appearance of SWVI.
- Teachers also should implement need assessment on how to teach SWVI sand apply student centered teaching learning process as much as possible.
- Schools that accept students with visual impairment for the first time are corner stone for psychological development of students with visual impairment. So, the school environment, class room safety, social interaction, access of educational materials and related elements must be soft as well as the school community should create supportive environment for SWVI.
- Schools that provide inclusive education as well as boarding school should be constructed in such a way

that, it allows free movement of SWVI; the class room table and chair arrangement must be suitable for them. In addition, the school should provide mobility and orientation training for SWVI as well as supply necessary educational materials as much as possible.

- MOE should construct boarding school at least one boarding school at Woreda level in collaboration with Regional education Bureau and Zone education office to respond the

## References

1. ANTO,A.(2004).*The Educational Challenges of Integrated Blind Students: The Case of Soddo Comprehensive High School. Unpublished Master's Thesis. AAU,AA.*
2. Arter, C. and Mason, H.L.(1994). 'Spelling for the visually impaired child', *British journal of Visually Impaired*, 12(2), 18-21.
3. AwetashHadgu(2015). *Psychosocial and Educational Challenges and Opportunities of Students with Visual Impairment: The Case of Adimahleka Primary School in Adwa Town.MA thesis, Addis Ababa University Department of Special Needs Education.*
4. Bricker etal (1984).*Teaching Children with Visual Impairment. Milton Keynes :Open University Press.*
5. Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications*
6. Daniel, D. (1966). *Attitude towards Disability and the Role of the Community Based Rehabilitation in Ethiopia. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Joensuu-Finland.*
7. FentawKebede (2019). *Exploring the Educational Practices and Challenges of Students with Visual Impairment: In the Case of KimirDingay Primary school MA Thesis in Special Needs and Inclusive Education Bahir Dar University*
8. Frid J. H. (1996). *Interviewing: the art of science. In N.K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds). Hand Book of Qualitative Research. (pp. 361-376) Sage Publication. Inc*
9. Gearheart, B.R., Weishan, M.W., &Gearheart, C.J. (1996).*The exceptional students in the regular classroom. (6thEd.). Columbus, Ohio: Merrill publishing company.*
10. Hatlen, P. H., & Curry, S. A. (1987).*In support of specialized programs for blind and visually impaired children: The impact of vision loss on learning. Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, 81(1), 7-13.*
11. Jindal-Snape, D. (2005). *Self-evaluation and recruitment of feedback for enhanced social interaction by a student with visual impairment. Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, 99 (8), 486-498.*
12. Lawrence (1987) *perceptual Factors in Braille Word Recognition. New York : American Foundation for the Blind.*
13. McGrath, C., Rust, J. (2002). *Academic achievement between class transition time for self Contained and developmental upper elementary classes. Journal of Instructional Psychology 29(1): 4043.*
14. Rodney, P. (2003). *The psychological aspect of visual impairment as a central understanding in the development of inclusion.British Journal of Visual Impairment, 21(1), 19-24.*
15. Rusalem ,H.(1972).*coping with the unseen environment New York :Teachers college press Columbia university.*

**Corresponding author Email: [melesemachew978@gmail.com](mailto:melesemachew978@gmail.com)**