

Employment Policy for People with Disabilities in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

This thesis examines policy issues associated with the employment of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The context of the thesis is specific to Saudi Arabia but has relevance for other Arab and Muslim countries. In particular, the thesis provides data on disability within a culture within which virtually no social research on the lives of people with disabilities has been conducted, nor has there been any scholarly discussion regarding the social model of disability. Furthermore it has been conducted by a Saudi woman researcher who has had to work within the restrictions imposed by the culture.

A mixed research method was used for the research. Quantitative research questionnaires complement the qualitative semi-structured interviews to study participants across the 50 targeted organisations from various sectors in Saudi Arabia. The study sample was examined in 3 phases: in Phase One (1) questionnaires were distributed to include 50 employers from the targeted organisations; in Phase Two (2) 24 questionnaires were distributed to employees with disabilities from 16 different organisations that hire people with disabilities; and Phase Three (3) consisted of 6 interviews with people with disability/disabilities and with 2 employers.

The thesis suggests that workplace environments and societal attributes contribute significantly to inefficiency, underemployment, and unemployment among persons with disability/disabilities. Additionally, employers in both private and public sector organisations lack concern for the needs of employees with disability/disabilities.

Low expectations of persons with disability/disabilities are reinforced by ineffective policies. Additionally, most organisations do not provide persons with disability/disabilities with

suitable tools that can enable them to perform their work as required, as making such tools available is given a lower priority than supplying able-bodied workers with the tools they need. This indicates that the nature of the workplace environment contributes significantly to the disregard, underemployment, and unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities. The high costs associated with employing people with disability/disabilities also leads to their alienation. At the same time, lack of experience in dealing with such individuals also contributes significantly to the low employment and productivity levels of such persons. Employees with disability/disabilities also tend to be engaged in jobs they are not qualified for, meaning that they are underemployed and their abilities not recognised.

People with disability/disabilities remain significantly alienated and disadvantaged in terms of the quality and quantity of work participation in both the public and the private sector. Consequently, there are lower employment expectations in relation to this; this perpetuates the perception of such workers as being inferior, high risk, and undesirable. Furthermore, if workplace environments in Saudi Arabia were adapted to better serve the needs of people with disability/disabilities, then the inclusion of such people in the labour force would increase.

In conclusion, the thesis makes a contribution to knowledge about people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia as well as presenting methodological insights into social research undertaken by Saudi women researchers in the country.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

the context of this thesis is that the experience of disability is profoundly different in different parts of the world. even when physical impairments are similar ,the experience of individuals with impairments are very often worlds apart . *In many countries in the world, persons with disability/disabilities and their associated allies have organised themselves over recent decades to counter the historic challenges of exclusion and oppression of persons with disability/disabilities. The challenges associated with these struggles are associated with individualistic and over-medicalised accounts of disability. Historically, the problems of persons with disability/disabilities have been associated with biological deficiency, moral failing, or karma and divine punishment. In contrast, the disability movement focuses on environmental barriers, cultural discourses and social oppression (Shakespeare, 2006.)*

The global politics of deinstitutionalisation and disability rights has presented numerous social explanations of disability. For example, in North America disability-related issues have been framed using civil rights and minority group terminology. In the Nordic countries the underlying discourse of persons with disability/disabilities is the relational model (Gustavsson et al., 2005; Hahn, 1988). Across the world, the idea of social role valorisation and normalisation have been inspirational especially when it comes to persons with learning disabilities. In Britain, for example, the social model of disability has been used to discuss the structural analysis of persons with disability/disabilities and their social exclusion (Shakespeare, 2006).

The research that is reported in this thesis was carried out in Saudi Arabia; the findings and conclusions are relevant to an investigation of the position of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The debates surrounding the social model of disability

have not impacted on the lives of such people in Saudi Arabia, and there has been little internal critique of the way in which Saudi society treats them. This thesis, written as it is in a way that is acceptable to Saudi authorities, contributes to improving the lives of disabled people.

In Saudi Arabia 3.7 percent of people live with disabilities (Walker, 2009). Significant numbers of people with disability/disabilities are unemployed (Alaikum, 2008). Most researchers who have carried out studies on people with disability/disabilities in the labour market show that people with disability/disabilities are capable of working productively and are accepted by employers in the particular society (Rispler-Chaim, 2007). However they fail to show why the majority of employers would not want to employ them (Lewis, 2004).

Policies developed for people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia are based on Islamic Sharia Law which is the moral law of Islam. Sharia Law is derived from 1) the Quran which is the central religious text of Islam and believed to be a revelation from God, 2) the example of the life of the prophet Muhammad, and 3) Fatwas which are legal opinions or learned interpretations that a qualified jurist can give on issues pertaining to the Islamic law that prescribes the rights of individuals to live dignified lives and to benefit from welfare programmes.

Saudi Arabia is in the process of developing as a society with social institutions that can cater for the people with disability/disabilities (Hasnain et al., 2008). Saudi Arabia is a monarchy and the royal family ruling Saudi Arabia follows Islamic Sharia Law. In order for a new law to be applied it needs to be presented to the royal family by the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia, also known as *Majlis as-Shura or Shura Council*, which is the formal advisory body of Saudi Arabia.

The Consultative Assembly has limited powers of government which include the power to propose laws to the King and cabinet, although it cannot pass or enforce laws unless these are agreed upon by the King; these will then be presented as decrees to be applied as law. It has 150 members, all of which are appointed by the King. The Consultative Assembly is headed by a Speaker. The current speaker or chairman is Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al ash-Sheikh in line with the tradition that has kept the post in the Royal Family.

According to the royal decrees that have been agreed upon by the Office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia deserve to be treated fairly in the labour market (Disabled Care System, 2000). This decree contains policies that aim to reduce negative attitudes and discrimination shown towards people with disability/disabilities in the labour market, especially when it comes to rehabilitation and the hiring processes (Kabbara, 2003). It has been established by studies such as Coleridge's (2000) that people with disability/disabilities are rarely employed. To substantiate this statement the study will review and evaluate available barriers as to why there exist rare cases of employment of people with disability/disabilities even though there are many laws which cater for people with disability/disabilities. Despite this, employers are able to inform job applicants that they cannot be employed based on their disability/disabilities.

Saudi Arabia has in place laws that protect people with disability/disabilities in the workplace. For instance, an organisation can be sued within a civil court for discriminating against people with disability/disabilities under national anti-discriminatory laws. However, such lawsuits are practically non-existent because

people with disability/disabilities are rarely employed, or may be employed as “phantom employees” which means they are legally employed but their employer prefers them to stay at home. This demonstrates the lack of awareness of the abilities of these people on the part of employers (Labaree, 2002).

Therefore, while it is recognised that people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia require special treatment and policies to integrate them within society and give them opportunities to be a part of the labour market (Arab News, 2008), employers on the other hand need to be more aware of the issue of disability, whether regarding policy or on the general knowledge level. According to Mansour (2010) the employability of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia is a social problem and they are being neglected because they are not being hired on the basis of their disabilities; therefore decision makers should increase awareness of laws regarding employment of people with disability/disabilities which should be made clear to employers and incentives should be offered to organisations hiring people with disability/disabilities.

Employment is a right for all human beings regardless of their abilities; it offers a means of social inclusion and a source of the financial resources needed for human well-being (Kosygina, 2005). Employment for people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia is mainly taken care of by the Labour and Workmen Law. This defines a person with disability/disabilities as “any person whose capacity to perform and maintain a suitable job has actually diminished as a result of a physical or mental infirmity” (p.59). This legislation guarantees the rights of people with disability/disabilities and advocates for non-discrimination at the work place and in the employment sector in general.

The government through the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs has developed and implemented career development programmes for people with disability/disabilities. The Ministry of Labour runs a career rehabilitation department that provides support for people with disability/disabilities. It follows up and implements career rehabilitation programmes, draws up rehabilitation policies and carries out research on the development of programmes (examples of such programmes will be presented in Chapter Two). It also carries out the actual rehabilitation of people with disability/disabilities and prepares them for employment (for example by providing physiotherapy after an accident).

Provision of rehabilitation programmes by the Saudi Arabia government is a great policy achievement. These programmes and policies are very beneficial to the employees since they help them prepare for employment opportunities. The Saudi American Bank (2000) reports that this group receives the training and rehabilitation needed to fit them for the market. Significant numbers of people with disability/disabilities have benefitted from this provision and have been able to compete favourably in the employment sector with the rest of job seekers.

The Ministry of Labour in Saudi Arabia have harmonised its employment laws to ensure job requirements are achievable for people with disability/disabilities. Reisam and Reisam (2003) note that there have been round-table talks between government and employers in attempts to ensure that the minimum academic qualification needed from people with disability/disabilities is lower compared to their counterparts; this is to accommodate the lack of opportunities in terms of the quality of education granted to people with disability/disabilities in the country with no judgment on their abilities. The government also works with other stakeholders

to ensure that the effects of negative attitudes witnessed in the labour market especially in the hiring process and of ineffective rehabilitation placement methods is minimised. Employers have also been encouraged to stop looking at employees in terms of their physical characteristics and instead, characterise them based on their abilities, reliability, efficiency, honesty and motivation.

Despite the development of various legislation, policies, and programmes to support the employment of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, studies have established that people still hold negative attitudes towards people with disability/disabilities which leads to discrimination in both the recruitment process and in placement methods (Walston, Al-Harbi & Al-Omar, 2008).

From the introduction it is evident that disability is an important issue in Saudi Arabia. The paper analyses disability in Saudi Arabia by reviewing government policy and the role of government in promoting the rights of persons with disability/disabilities in society. The thesis promotes their employment; information was collected from different stakeholders including persons with disability/disabilities, organisations, and employers. In addition the thesis discusses recruitment policies and how these policies affect the employment of persons with disability/disabilities.

Furthermore, the research explores gender, culture and religion in order to understand fundamentals regarding disability and persons with disability/disabilities. Saudi Arabian culture, in a way that is similar to most Islamic cultures, defines the roles and responsibilities of different members of the community. Since I am a female researcher, I faced challenges because my role in the society is strictly defined. This challenge helped me understand from a personal perspective the cultural challenges of doing research as a female member of the community; this area will be explored later in the thesis.

1.2 Motivation for conducting the research

The researcher's motivation for conducting this research was threefold, firstly it was a condition of my sponsorship. The Saudi Arabian government sponsors students to receive higher education in countries such as the United Kingdom which are more developed in terms of research carried out. This has been an initiative which aims to encourage research in different areas that will ultimately improve the quality of education in Saudi Arabia and thus all aspects of life.

Upon graduation I received sponsorship from King Abdullah's (peace be upon him) foreign scholarship programme to take an MA in special education in the United Kingdom.

When I came back to Saudi Arabia I was employed as an instructor in Taif University and proceeded to write a research proposal on the employment of people with disability/disabilities. I was also sponsored to further pursue my PhD by Taif University. The University has put in place various research programmes to benefit the country, some of which targets the health and social care of people with disability/disabilities.

I had written a paper during my MA studies on personal planning and how available it is in the Saudi educational system for individuals with autism. This also discussed the social care of individuals with autism which also relates to this research paper. Furthermore there is a lack of literature in the country on this topic; an initial search of the literature showed that there is a dearth of published literature on disability in Saudi Arabia. This is not a great surprise to a researcher from Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is a member of the G20, an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies, and has a highly developed

industrial and economic base with a high GDP (gross domestic product). However, the experience of 'disability' in Saudi Arabia has arguably received less recognition and development, especially when compared with the accomplishments of academics and disability activists within Western liberal democracies (e.g. the United Kingdom). On the same note, there is a large body of literature on disability from Western academics and activities related to disability in the developed world. Saudi Arabia has seen no such published debate. This provides the background to the literature review in this thesis, which is characterised by huge gaps rather than content.

There is very clearly a need for more research on issues relating to social care and policies related to disability and people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Although research has been carried out in the past in Saudi Arabia on issues related to the development of people with disability/disabilities, the aspect of social care has rarely been addressed.

The development of an extensive research programme is a very urgent needs in Saudi Arabia as more research is required to identify the different issues which people with disability/disabilities face in their daily lives in the Kingdom. Previous studies conducted in Saudi Arabia have been focused more towards the educational, health and medical aspects of disability than various other factors that affect people with disability/disabilities in their daily life and social care.

Although there have been studies that have dealt with broader issues relating to people with disability/disabilities, the major focus has been based on medical models which have categorised people according to their physical differences. Therefore, there is a need for more extensive research that does not label people

as having disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, in order to address the gap in the literature, this study has also focused on assessing the development of the physical environment in order to ease mainstreaming and promote inclusion of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia in areas that are outside the purview of any medical component or medical discourse. It is essential to develop research based on real life situations that address the issues related to disability and people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

To further highlight the importance of this study, there has been reference to people with disability/disabilities so as to emphasis on them being people and that disability is only one of their many characteristics as individuals. According to Tom Shakespeare (2001) disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's difference. He calls that the social model, and that is something institutions in Saudi Arabia should be aware of. Therefore they should look into ways of eliminating obstacles that will make the life of people with disability/disabilities more difficult and replace the obstacles with features that make their lives easier. Further, the aim of the study concentrates on the existing employment policies for people with disability/disabilities along with future actions which the government of Saudi Arabia needs to look into to develop more stringent and real-life-based employment programmes for people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Rationale for the research

The concept of 'disability' applies in the context of an interaction between an individual's decreased functionality and the environmental conditions and demands. Traditionally, disability research studies have concentrated on the manner in which the individuals with disabilities are rehabilitated or treated within society. In the context of Saudi Arabia, there is a paucity of research on employment policy for

individuals with disabilities.

Such studies can be viewed through the lens of a medical model. In this model, persons with disability/disabilities are perceived to be sick, and, therefore in need of care. They may also be seen through the lens of a social model. In this second model people with disabilities are viewed from a psychological perspective and in terms of their experiences. Otherwise they can be viewed with a mix of the social and medical models. More recent studies have also sought to look at the economic, political, and social forces which serve to marginalise individuals with disabilities. The field of the study of disability has been transformed throughout recent years, inspired by perspectives drawn from social science, women's studies, sociology, education, economics, and cultural studies.

These studies have focused on the concept that individuals with disabilities are a minority group which has been discriminated against. Taking this into perspective, studies on disability have paralleled studies on race or gender inequalities. Additionally, disability studies have provided the methodological and intellectual inspiration required to create disability policy. Hence, the philosophies and perspectives drawn from disability studies are applicable to ongoing issues in public policy.

Indeed, the issue of disability in Saudi Arabia is a significant collective concern for the country's policymakers. Depending on the description given to disability, current estimates indicate that some 3.73% of the Saudi population experiences functional disabilities which challenge their independence or potential to seek profitable employment. In order to address the employment issues inherent in the employment of people with disabilities, it is crucial that there be a review of the prevalence of

each type of condition.

Another important area that has been neglected is the extent the requirements of persons with disability/disabilities have been integrated into day-to-day activities. For example, persons with physical disabilities, even if looked at from different perspectives, need some assistance to be able to take advantage of the available opportunities. For instance, the improvement of working conditions enables a person with disability/disabilities to accomplish their respective tasks and achieve their vision more easily. Governmental policies and institutional policies can often create conditions and requirements which improve the conditions of persons with disability/disabilities.

Numerous options and structures exist across the world. For example, equality and provision of equal opportunities are some of the implementation measures in place to advance the integration of persons with disability/disabilities into organisations. However, streamlining the entire processes is a challenge from the perspective of the organisations, government and persons with disability/disabilities. Understanding these challenges allows the development of better approaches to advance the requirements of persons with disability/disabilities. The challenges affecting such persons should be viewed from different perspectives and not from a medical or physical perspective. Such a process enables the identification of the appropriate frameworks needed to advance the requirements of persons with disability/disabilities. Therefore, understanding the challenges and integrating a range policies may improve the basis for supporting persons with disability/disabilities in achieving their respective goals and expectations.

1.4 General background information about Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East; it borders the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The country is ruled by an absolute monarchy. It is mainly a Muslim country and its majority culture is Arabic. Islamic Sharia laws are used in governing Saudi Arabia.

Disability in Saudi Arabia is a great societal issue. It is estimated that 3.75% of its population have disabilities that limit their functionality and independence (Al-Gain & Al-Abdulwahab, 2001). There are different forms of disabilities that range from physical impairment, visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual, and mental health disabilities among other types. Disability in the Arab World is growing for three main reasons: violence, poverty and malnutrition, and blood marriage (Kabbara, 2003). Kabbara (2003) has conducted the only published survey of disability in Saudi Arabia and he argues that the practice of consanguineous marriages or blood marriages is the greatest contributor of disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, Kabbara has analysed instances of employment among the people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Various employment and service provision programmes for people with disability/disabilities have been enacted in Saudi Arabia but a great deal more needs to be done to ensure that people with disability/disabilities have equal opportunities within the country.

Saudi Arabia's interpretation of Islam imposes restrictions on the working conditions and independence of women. Women face different challenges in carrying out their functions and this has been crucial to my research. A woman carrying out research faces challenges with interview respondents and in general, data collection and compiling.

Muslim women in Saudi Arabia have boundaries imposed by their culture and

religion. For example, all government and private sectors have separate buildings for each sex, there are boundaries in the protocol of communicating with the opposite sex, women cannot drive in Saudi Arabia and the common means of transportation is either being driven by a male member of the family or a hired driver depending on social status; public transportation is very poor and not commonly used by native Saudis which makes the mobility of females difficult.

When I discussed the conditions under which I have had to work with in Saudi Arabia with British researchers they appeared incredulous. It has become clear to me that what is a quite normal life for me as a woman in Saudi Arabia is seen as almost impossibly restrictive by my British colleagues. As a result I will give some space to this in my methodology, as readers need to understand the context in which I was working (For more details see Chapter Two).

As an Islamic nation, Saudi Arabia's Sharia laws advocate human rights especially for people with disability/disabilities. The government has taken steps to help people with disability/disabilities. For instance, in the last two decades pre-marriage blood tests have become compulsory for couples planning to get married so as reduce the possibility of a child being born with disability/disabilities. Moreover, the government has put in place measures and finances for the promotion of health facilities for people with disability/disabilities (Saudi Arabia Country Profile on Disability, 2002).

Training facilities for people with disability/disabilities and employment laws and policies have been developed to cater for them. Promotion of welfare and social facilities for people with disability/disabilities is also a clear indication of a positive attitude towards disability in Saudi Arabia in theory. Despite this, more needs to be

put in place in terms of reducing the causes of disability such as discouraging the culture of blood marriages. Education should be promoted on the treatment of the people with disability/disabilities to reduce discrimination in society. In addition an appropriate physical environment needs to be provided and adjusted to help make the lives of people with disability/disabilities as convenient as possible. Employment laws in Saudi Arabia need to be enhanced to ensure non-discrimination in relation to people with disability/disabilities in recruitment and in the workplace.

1.4.1 Current state of policy practices relating to disability

Policies and practices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are based on Islamic Sharia law, which places the emphasis on the respect of human rights. It also advocates against discrimination. Sharia law promotes the right of individuals with disabilities to live with dignity without being discriminated against (Al-Jadid, 2013). According to Al-Jadid (2013), many persons with disabilities in Saudi Arabia experience some form of marginalisation for such reasons as a lack of understanding of the nature of the disability, in addition to feeling shame because of people staring at them because they are not accustomed to dealing with people with disability/disabilities.

Historically, the Saudi government has made efforts to introduce policies to ensure social and economic inclusion of persons with disability/disabilities. For instance, in 1987 the Legislation of Disability (LD) was enacted, becoming the first-ever legislation for individuals with disabilities in the country. The legislation contained certain provisions that ensured persons with disability/disabilities equal rights to able-bodied persons in society. In 2000, the Saudi government enacted the Disability Code to offer the assurance that individuals with disabilities would have access to free and suitable medical, educational, social, psychological, and rehabilitation services via the country's public agencies.

As Al-Jadid (2013) comments, these laws and policies have not been put into practice well in Saudi Arabia. In his view, this lack of effective implementation has contributed to the development of a gap between the structures of these legislations and service delivery, resulting in a lack the provision of special education, and the subsequent lack of employment opportunities for persons with disability/disabilities.

The Saudi government is making ongoing efforts to introduce policies to help persons with disability/disabilities. In 2013, the Saudi government announced it planned to provide private employers with incentives to recruit more than 100,000 people with disabilities (Trenwith, 2013).

In 2014, the Saudi Ministry of Labour announced it had come up with regulations that ensured employees with disability/disabilities received equal benefits to those received by able-bodied workers within the private sector. The new policy also requires employees with disability/disabilities to have a certificate from the Ministry of Social Affairs or the Ministry of Labour indicating the form and severity of the disability.

The policy further states that, in order for the individuals with disability/disabilities to work within the private sector, they need to seek jobs they are able to perform in spite of their disabilities. In addition, the employer needs to provide the individual with disability/disabilities with a work environment that enables the individual to perform the required tasks. Furthermore, no person with disability/disabilities should be discriminated against in terms of monthly salary or other rights which might be preferentially accorded to the able-bodied persons. The policy applies to all possible forms of disabilities, for example hearing or visual impairments, physical

disabilities, mental disabilities, difficulties in learning, behavioural and speech problems, autism, as well as any form of handicap (Saudi Gazette, 2014).

1.5 Significance of the study

The results of the study will help create a more effective approach to the adequate assessment and management of the employment of people with disabilities. In summary, the Saudi government along with some as other organisations in Saudi Arabia have made efforts to address the issue of the employment of persons with disability/disabilities. However, what is needed is a comprehensive understanding of the attitudinal, environmental and policy concerns that have the most significant impact on the employment of this group, and the extent to which organisations have implemented the policies.

The study aims to highlight, reinforce and stimulate the capacity of organisations that hire persons with disability/disabilities to implement these policies. The research results will also provide stimuli to policymakers to make significant policy change to uphold the integrity of persons with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

It is crucial to deal with gaps in the current knowledge regarding the nature of disability as well as create suitable support programmes to address their needs. Within Saudi society, people's perspectives regarding disabilities is rooted in the simple idea of disability, and comprises helplessness, continual dependence, joblessness and lack of productivity. On account of these attitudes, it is critical to examine the employment of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of employers and employees with disability/disabilities. It also justifies the need to examine the recruitment of, adjustments for, as well as people's awareness of the employment of people with disability/disabilities.

1.6 Research objectives

The study seeks to investigate employment for people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the research has the following objectives:

1. To examine the impact of national disability anti-discrimination policy on employer practices in Saudi Arabia
2. To examine the extent to which the policy have been implemented within 50 organisations.
3. To assess the amount of support given to people with disability/disabilities in order to facilitate their working within organisations.
4. To explore the attitudes of managers within the organisations to disability.
5. To evaluate the level of existing attitudinal barriers towards people with disability/disabilities in the labour market
6. To examine the policy from the perspective of employees with disability/disabilities.

1.7 Research questions

The research questions were developed from the study objectives. They include:

1. What is the impact of national disability anti-discrimination policy on employer practices in Saudi Arabia?
2. To what extent have the policies been implemented?
3. Are people with disability/disabilities adequately supported to work within the organisations?
4. What are the attitudes of managers within the organisations to disability?

5. What is the level of existing attitudinal barriers towards people with disability/disabilities in the labour market?
6. What is the perspective of employees with disability/disabilities towards the policy?

1.8 An overview of the thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the thesis by presenting the reasons for carrying out the research, the rationale, motivation factors, background on Saudi Arabia, and other important information including the research questions, ethical considerations, and potential benefits which can be achieved by carrying out the research. The second chapter presents information on Saudi Arabia and disability. This chapter discusses types of disabilities and the policies that Saudi Arabia has employed in advancing the requirements of persons with disability/disabilities. Examples of the policies and approaches include the Saudisation Plan and the Community Based Rehabilitation Plan. The third chapter presents literature on disability across the world, especially works focusing on Saudi Arabia. It discusses models and addresses an extensive number of works on disability. Chapter Four discusses the methodology and the method of data collection and the underlying approaches used to collect the appropriate information. It addresses the numerous approaches to improving the reliability, credibility and applicability of the collected information. Chapter Five presents the findings in the three phases. Chapter Six discusses the data collected while Chapter Seven presents the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings. This chapter seeks to understand the workings of the different institutions and bodies in advancing the requirements of persons with

disability/disabilities. The data collected easily allows the approaches, which should be championed in order to achieve the needs and requirements of persons with disability/disabilities.

1.8.1 Employees and interviews

In term of the research design a mixed method approach was used in order to look at the topic in more depth; a qualitative research approach was adopted in which questionnaires were administered to the study subjects and some data was also collected through interviews. Interviews were used to assess, evaluate and analyse the available resources. A thorough literature review was of paramount importance since it was used to bring together the data being currently recorded (Kloman, 2008). A quantitative approach was used on a small scale for the questionnaires to measure the percentage of organisations who hire individuals with disabilities, the gender, age, and type of disabilities, and how long have these individuals have been working in the organisation.

The study sample was divided into 3 sections; Phase One (1) will include 50 employers from the targeted organisations. This was followed by Phase Two (2) where 24 questionnaires were distributed to employees with disabilities from 16 different organisations that hire people with disabilities; this depended on the outcome of Phase One (1). Phase Three (3) was made up of 6 interviews on people with disability/disabilities and with 2 employers; this also was dependent on Phases One (1) and Two (2).

The study uses questionnaires, observations and interviews in relation to the participants employed by the 50 targeted large organisations. Data was collected

by the use of questionnaires that were administered to the participants to respond to and also through interviews. Interviews took between 30 to 60 minutes. This approach was chosen to guarantee maximum quality and reliability of data. Interviews were voice-recorded to allow successive accurate analysis of the collected data. The use of questionnaires and interviews will ensure that the researcher will maintain control during data collecting, without discouraging the discussion of any important further data. Observation will be also be used to collect data using the available resources.

For effectiveness and the efficient distribution of the materials, I hired a male porter who distributed the Phase One (1) questionnaires to employers in the aforementioned institutions. The choice of a male porter was also effective when Phase One (1) started because he had easier access to the male sections of all organisations and it was faster for him in terms of transportation. It is also essential to note that a third party was present during interviews with male interviewees for cultural and religious reasons (more details will be presented regarding the male porter and the third party in Chapter Two). All the data was distributed and recorded in Arabic then translated into English by the researcher, taking into consideration confidentiality in addition to ensuring that no important information was lost with translation.

Results from the questionnaires distributed to the 50 organisations found that 16 organisation (32% percent) of the total number of organisations employed people with disability/disabilities; employees with disability/disabilities from the 16 organisations were then given a second questionnaire to gather information about the nature of the disability, recruitment strategy, adjustments, trainings available,

policies, and support. Following this an interview took place with 6 different employees with disabilities in order to look into the topic in more depth and to ascertain the validity of the responses given.

In terms of the analysis and presentation, data obtained from questionnaires examined questionnaires and information from interviews for accuracy and coding completeness, and the data was keyed into a database and descriptive responses analysed according to frequency distribution as well as descriptive statistics. Any information from the questionnaires and interviews that was incomplete was exempted during the analysis. Finally, frequency tables along with descriptive statistics were created to display results with respect to interview responses and study questions within the questionnaire (Li & Zhao, 2008).

1.9 Ethical considerations

The initial stage of this research involved distributing questionnaires to employers of organisations. The content of the questionnaires did not require any individual information about employees. All of the information was in relation to company statistics, awareness of and application of disability legislation, and company attitudes towards disabilities. Following the results of the first stage of the research it was necessary to interview employees with disability/disabilities, and at this stage ethical approval was sought from the Faculty Ethics Committee of Manchester Metropolitan University.

Progress in any field depends greatly on research that, in most cases, involve human subjects. In this regard, the principles of human rights and general research ethics must be upheld. International organisations have developed several principles to guide this process. In 2004, a meeting was convened by the Islamic Organisation in

Egypt to discuss the Islamic perspective on these principles. The general research principles include avoiding harm in the course of research, respect for the respondent, ensuring that the research is of a particular benefit, and upholding justice. To have an in-depth understanding of the Islamic stand on the principles of research, it is necessary to consider the importance given to the pursuit of education in the Muslim world. Early Muslim scholars studied the Quran and acquired extensive knowledge in fields such as natural sciences, medicine and chemistry through research (Fadel, 2010).

1.10 Potential benefits

This research will provide a better understanding of the problems that might be faced by both employers and employees with disability/disabilities when the policy of employing people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia is applied. The results will help determine how the policy can serve people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia in employment, and may find room for improvement (or better application) of the policies. Limitations included the inability of the researcher to cover all organisations in Saudi Arabia. The research was carried out in organisations that were willing to participate.

Chapter Two: Research in Saudi Arabia and disability

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with background regarding Saudi Arabia in general, and disability in Saudi Arabia in particular. This is important because it provides the context for the research for a British readership. Saudi Arabian society is complex and this chapter is intended to outline some of the contradictions that provide the context for the evaluation of disability policy. On paper, everything is in place for integration for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia and this chapter will outline how a consistent series of policies has provided the framework for a positive life for people with disabilities. However the reality is very different from what should happen in practice and this chapter will also highlight the reality for many people with disabilities in the country.

In critically discussing the subject of Saudi Arabia and disability I will develop the premise that, regardless of the magnitude of the issue (employment of people with disability), awareness of the policies are deficient. I will also include a brief account of Saudi Arabia and its people, and afterwards a general view of the government and policies on employment. Finally I will discuss Saudi Arabia as a Muslim country and the boundaries regarding the working conditions of women. Women face unique challenges in carrying out their duties and this has posed particular issues for me as a researcher in Saudi Arabia. A woman carrying out research for instance faces challenges while interviewing respondents and in general with data collection and compilation.

Policies for employment of people with disability in Saudi Arabia are connected to the underpinnings of Islamic Sharia, which is Islam's legal system and which is derived from the holy book, the Quran, Islam's central text, and Fatwas, the rulings

of Islamic scholars. The Saudi Arabian government, through Islamic law, emphasises human dignity and rights in relation to persons with disability. It is from this perspective that policies for the employment of people with disabilities have been developed. Policies for people with disabilities in the workplace have been developed for more than two decades and have been designed to ensure that people with disabilities benefit from the economic development of the country.

The intention has been to ensure that the Saudi community adapts to the modern environment, society, and life by taking into consideration the psychological, intellectual and livelihood characteristics of every citizen. The research on policies for people with disability in Saudi Arabia has been informed by a lack of research that establishes the current trends in the employability of such persons.

Studies such as Alajm's (2001) have noted that there is lack of regular and reliable reports on policies to ensure people with disability in Saudi Arabia are employed. Additionally, institutions that champion individuals with disability are prevalent in Saudi Arabia in urban areas as compared to rural areas. It is from this perspective that a research that touches on how best these policies can harmonise the already existing disparities between the rights of those with disability/disabilities in rural and those in urban centres is necessary.

The research by Ali et al. (2003) provides an insight that indicates that researching policies for people with disability in Saudi Arabia is a multidimensional as well as a complex matter. According to the Labour and Workmen Law of Saudi Arabia, there are still social, political and moral issues with the enactment of policies and laws that guide best practice or approaches to employing individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

2.1.1 Preliminary Information on Saudi Arabia

This section gives an overview of Saudi Arabia in terms of location, population, politics, laws, economics and employment in general.

The policies that guide the employment of people in Saudi Arabia will be better understood by first providing background information regarding the religion, culture, regions and geographic orientation of the country.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by Ibn Saud and is located in the Middle East; it is bordered by the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

The Saudi population is 28.83 million (2013) and the country is divided into rural and urban areas. In Saudi Arabia the rural population was 17.71 % as of 2011. The country is ruled by an absolute monarchy: the Heads of State have all come from the “Al-Saud Family” and have all governed with the help and support of their family. This is important in understanding the nature of legislation in Saudi Arabia as laws are made through a complex system of formal Royal Decrees.

Sharia law, which is Islam's legal system, is used to govern Saudi Arabia as the country is mainly Muslim underpinned by a more general Arabic culture. Saudi Arabia is the world's second largest oil producer and the largest exporter, which make it a high-income economy.

Saudi Arabia is a relatively young but wealthy nation with multifaceted economic and social problems when it comes to issues to do with people with disability. One critical factor that relates to the employment of people with disability is that the country is highly dependent on one resource, oil, and is heavily relying on imported labour to support the ever-increasing economic growth. In recognition of these social problems there is a need to assess the extent to which policies that have been

developed will ensure that people with disability in Saudi Arabia benefit from the enormous wealth within the country.

Disability in Saudi Arabia is a great societal issue. It is estimated that 3.75% of the population has functional disabilities that limit the individual's functionality and independence (Al-Gain & Al-Abdulwahab, 2001). There are different forms of disabilities that range from physical disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, and mental health problems among others. Research indicates that disability in the Arab World is growing for three main reasons: violence, poverty and malnutrition, and blood marriage (Kabbara, 2003). The practice of consanguineous marriages or blood marriages is the greatest contributor of disabilities in Saudi Arabia (Tadmouri, 2009) since violence and poverty is not a big issue in Saudi Arabia. There has been official recognition of the needs of people with disabilities not least in the various employment and service provision programmes that have been developed to assist people with disabilities (Barnes, 2005).

In addition, the unemployment rate remains a challenge and, according to Index Mundi, the unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia stands at 13 %, with 79 % of these being women (Al-Lamki, 2007). The unemployment rate for people with disability stands at 83 % (Al-Lamki, 2010). Certain disparities have been attributed to the cultural orientation of Saudi Arabia where females do not enjoy the same rights as males.

The key issue with employment of people with disability is the fusion of an already unique religion with policies. The religion is highly specific and is premised on a form of fundamentalism to an extent that it cannot deviate from its beliefs to

accommodate policies. The country is made up of politico-religious ideologies and, as such, people with disability have to conform to interpretations of the Islamic faith.

Historically Saudi Arabia is made up of several regions with each comprising a different social structure. For instance, the Western part of the country is considered within Saudi Arabia to be progressive and cosmopolitan, something that allows the fusion of policies for people with disability and the Islamic religion. However, overall at the moment, all regions have what can be termed a 'totalitarian' approach which has prevented the implementation of key policies. Instead of operating as a democratic state, the country has become an authoritarian but centralised state that disadvantages female citizens, although Jeddah is the most liberal city in the country.

Saudi Arabia's human resources, their regional characteristics, their evolution according to population and religious specificities as well as the general socio-economic development is culture-dependent to an extent that the Saudi government takes into consideration religious specifications when drafting and implementing policies. Additionally, the influence these factors have on women in particular and on the employment of people with disability is the reason for high unemployment rates for the same groups. Geographically, there is in relation to unemployment among people with disability in Saudi Arabia an imbalance of supply and demand which arises from a mismatch between labour force expertise and the jobs available (Mellahi, 2007).

2.1.2 People with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia

To understand employment policies for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia it is

important to consider the current prevailing situation in terms of various factors such as gender and area-specific disability which prevail in the country, and types of disabilities in Saudi Arabia. This will all be evaluated taking into consideration that 17.71 % of the population lives in rural areas.

2.1.3 Trends and demographics in relation to disabilities in Saudi Arabia

To address disability related issues, policies and trends in employment, it is imperative to make better use of the existing information on the prevalence and demographics of disability. Gibson et al. (2010) argues that understanding policies that aim at promoting the employability of individuals with disability in Saudi Arabia calls for the understanding of issues such as the statistics on gender in relation to those most affected or prone to disabilities, the nature of disabilities and how common they are within a given gender or region, education or awareness created with regard to the existing disabilities in relation to co-existence and employment. It is important to note however, that Gibson remarked on the small amount of information concerning the prevalence and incidence of disability, impairment and their socio-demographic properties.

An understanding of the spread of disability in relation to gender is also dependent on multifaceted approaches to the definition of what constitutes disability (see Abdulmajeed, 2005; Al-Rasheed & Vitalis, 2004; Chaudhry, 2010). Depending on such definitions, it is approximated that over 4% of the total population of people of Saudi Arabia are regarded as 'people with disability' (Chaudhry, 2010). This percentage is regardless of gender, region or the type of disability. The countrywide data that was extracted from demographic surveys indicates that about 1.96% of the total population who have different disabilities is female depending on definitions offered by scholars such as Vitalis (2004). However, Vitalis asserts that the difference

between the number of male and female individuals with disability may be skewed depending on the definition of disability and because of under-reporting of cases and incidences of disability.

Contrariwise, contemporary studies that compared disabilities in different parts of the country have indicated that the main causes of disability (79.6%) are cerebral palsy and developmental delay followed by accident-related incidences (Gilgun et al., 2010). However, other scholars have argued that close family marriages have contributed to the occurrence of disability in Saudi Arabia (Gilgun et al., 2010). According to data from Vitalis (2004), distribution of disability by regions in Saudi Arabia varies depending on the type of disability. Abdulmajeed (2005) argues that the distribution of disability in Saudi Arabia is difficult to estimate by regions, rather it is possible to describe distribution based on type and place. The table below has been included to help in understanding the distribution of people with disability as per region. It should be noted that rural and urban areas as indicated below represent the collective data from all rural and urban areas for all regions in Saudi Arabia.

Table 1: Distribution of persons with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabian regions

Source: The Economic Bureau, Saudi Arabia (2013)

The above table provides an understanding of the need for inclusive education and

the creation of awareness of persons with disability in Saudi Arabia in relation to the available opportunities for employment. The critical role played by the Ministry of Education is worth considering.

The Ministry runs the Noor Institute for the Blind, the Institute for Intellectually Disabled, and the Aman Institute for the Deaf. In addition to the profession-related training these institutions offer, they also provide education on awareness about policies that guide the employment of persons with disability. On the other hand, there have been a considerable number of campaigns, tours and awareness creation programmes targeted at citizens and job markets on the importance of including people with varied disabilities in the creation of wealth for the nation. These institutions have included the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs, which have been running campaigns on awareness and career rehabilitation centres in Riyadh, Taif and Damman. The other institutions are the Social Rehabilitation Centres for the Severely Disabled in Riyadh, Al-Ahsa and Medinah, the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centres in 5 regions, the Institute for Paraplegic Children in Riyadh and Taif, and Social Welfare Centres for the elderly in 7 major cities.

2.1.4 Collection of area and gender-specific data

Gender is an important area that needs to be considered in Saudi Arabia, since the region is dominated by Muslim society which imposes norms in relation to the lives of men and women in particular. Strict rules about segregation of unrelated men and women mean that rehabilitation centres for males and females are separate; however there are no proper statistics or data to illustrate the number or distribution of rehabilitation centres for people with disability/disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation trainees are mostly males while the most social

rehabilitation targets persons with severe disabilities or multiple disabilities who are female. This clearly implies that there are a number of females with severe or multiple disabilities and there is a barrier against women benefitting from vocational rehabilitation. Hence, a cross-analysis by area, gender and other factors is important in understanding the current scenario in a better way.

2.1.5 Types of disabilities

There are various kinds of disabilities prevailing in Saudi Arabia which can be categorised both in rural and urban areas. The official government figures are shown in the table below in table 2 below.

Table 2: Number of people with disability/disabilities by area and type of disability

	Number of Persons with Disabilities	Physical Disability	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Intellectual Disability	Psychiatric Disability	Overlapping
Urban	41.30%	39.60%	48.20%	36.90%	38.70%	31.30%	37.70%
Rural	58.70%	60.40%	51.80%	63.10%	61.30%	68.70%	62.30%

Source: The Economic Bureau, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Physical disability is an area of concern for the Saudi Government as providing employment for this group is a difficult task. However, the government has constantly been seeking to develop employment policies by providing jobs best suited for persons which a specific kind of disability. Special positions have been developed in governmental bodies to provide employment to people with intellectual impairment and hearing impairment. Special language programmes and initiatives have been implemented in both private and local bodies to ensure that people with visual and hearing impairment can be trained, usually free of charge, so as to ensure a livelihood for them.

Figure 1: Number of persons with disability/disabilities by type of disability

Source: The Economic Bureau, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

This study reveals that disabilities are more prevalent in rural areas compared to urban areas as there is a lack of opportunities with special programmes and government initiatives which deal with the issue. Employment policies in rural area are also much less strict in terms of their practical implications than are those in urban areas (Al-Turaiki, 2000). Almost all services and programmes are concentrated in the metropolitan areas and hence are not easily accessible to the rural population.

In the last two decades the Ministry of Health along with the Ministry of Employment in Saudi Arabia have established various rehabilitative services for persons with disabilities and other residents of Saudi Arabia. The majority of these programmes provide physical, occupational, speech, and hearing therapy to ensure that people with disabilities are properly trained and capable of understanding their job and so generating a livelihood for themselves. The Ministry of Labour constantly seeks to provide jobs for people with disabilities, not only in Saudi Arabia but in other

countries such as the United Kingdom, as motivational leaders, lecturers and in other roles.

Rehabilitation programmes act as an integral part of modern health care and delivery services as they receive special attention from governmental bodies to ensure that their services are available to all citizens and residents of Saudi Arabia. Specialised medical centres have been developed to provide medical aid to people with disabilities. The Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre and the King Khalid Eye Hospital are among the most renowned and modern healthcare centres across the globe (Alsekait, 2003). The various kinds of disabilities categorised by institutes in Saudi Arabia have been highlighted below.

Figure 2: Various categories of disabilities

Source: The Economic Bureau, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

2.2 Government policy and employment in Saudi Arabia

2.2.1 History of employment trends in Saudi Arabia

This section focuses on Saudi Arabia's pre-industrial era and the history of the Kingdom's foundation. The political and ideological foundations on which the Saudi state was established helps to explain the nature of Saudi society today. The formation of Saudi Arabian polity in 1932 was influenced by two principal factors. The first was the political power vacuum created by the demise of the Ottoman Empire and Britain's expansionist ambitions. The second factor relates to the rivalries between the two main local candidates for ruling Arabia, Sharif Husseyn bin Ali of Mecca, and the later King Abdulaziz Al Saud (Kashrami, 2003). At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire was in decline, and it was struggling to maintain its grip over the Arabian Peninsula. Not prepared to forego Arabia without a fight, it undertook several invasions in 1818 and in 1871 in an attempt to

re-establish its authority. However, large areas of these territories remained without an Ottoman governor. According to Al-Angari (1998) the only *Amir* who still supported Ottoman rule was Ibn Rashid of Ha'il, though only nominally and without providing any military support.

Meanwhile, Sharif Husseyn in Hijaz actively supported the British against the Ottomans, and Ibn Saud also allied himself with the British in the war against the Ottomans, although without any direct involvement. At this point in the development of Saudi Arabia there was very little economic activity. Before the advent of oil, the country had very little agricultural activity, and what existed was mainly subsistence agriculture. There was a small surplus from internal trade and travellers passing through en route for destinations outside the area - for example, as in Aljouf, which served the Persia-Egypt trade route. The Hajj economy of the Hijaz was self-regulating and needed no direct involvement by government. According to an estimate of state revenues quoted by Niblock (1982), in 1938, just before the first major oil find, Hijaz customs and revenue from pilgrims amounted to £1.3m (gold). Salaries to state employees could not be paid until the pilgrims' revenues had been received.

2.2.2 Employment in Saudi Arabia:

Depending on qualifications and the regions, Saudi Arabia have laws, policies, regulations and statutes that relate to the employment of people in general. To begin with, there is the policy of Saudisation that ensures a considerable number of vacancies have been created by restricting the number of expatriates that foreign or private firms employs at the expense of the locals (Saudi Arabians). In addition to this, efforts to rectify the general low participation of Saudi women in the labour force in Saudi Arabia are represented by Royal Decree 120. This invites all ministries

and the high counsels to promote, facilitate and remove obstacles facing women in the labour market and to create new jobs. Further the Khadijah Bint Khouwailid Centre for Businesswomen is another institution where women in Saudi Arabia can source employment or advice on job vacancies for women (Green & Thorogood, 2004).

2.2.3 Employment of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia

Gill et al. (2011) argue that the main sources of employment for persons with disability in Saudi Arabia are the institutions that first cared for the same group. The Ministry of Education established the Department of Special Learning which, according to Gill et al. (2011), is one of the organisations that employ people with disabilities either as teachers or professionals in fields such as engineering, secretarial services and others.

As one of the several statutes that guide the welfare of individuals with disabilities, the Legislation of Disability (LD) passed in 1987 ensures that the employment of Saudis with disability/disabilities in the Department of Special Learning is harmonised in accordance with required standards (Gill et al., 2011). To contextualise the employability of persons with disability in Saudi Arabia, the Disability Code that was passed in 2000 by the Saudi Government is yet another statute that has ensured the employment of those with disability/disabilities in centres such as the Ebsar Society for Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired, Al Rabie Saudi Foods Company, the World Health Organisation (which have employed over 2000 individuals with disability since Saudi Arabia is one of the twelve (12) Eastern Mediterranean countries which collaborates with it), and the Active Labour Market Employment Policy (ALMEP) (which has recruited individuals with disability in Saudi Arabia as part of its initiatives to sensitive people on the benefits of employing

persons with disabilities).

2.2.4 Schemes improving employability of the people of Saudi Arabia

Saudisation is one of the critical programmes in Saudi Arabia that has tended to solve problems with unemployment among the people of Saudi Arabia in general and people with disability in particular. Saudisation as a policy is targeting the symptom (unemployment) by also focusing on the problem of un-employability. In many respects, the education system and the labour market situations are poorly aligned; strict religious controls over the content of the curriculum and a lack of forward planning means that many young Saudis are not being equipped with the hard or soft skills necessary to meet economic demands (Pini, 2010).

The Saudi government, working through its agents who are concerned with Saudisation, have struggled to maintain the already difficult and strenuous quota system with a minimum number of national employees which may make it even more difficult for persons with disability (Gill et al., 2011). On the same level, Nitaqat is a programme which has been initiated to create employment for the Saudi population. Like Saudisation, the intention is to reduce the number of the more than 10 million expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia (Al-Lamki, 2007).

It is assumed that, if the trend seen in private companies continues, it will be difficult for people with disabilities to be employed, since most private companies prefer to employ foreigners as they are cheaper compared to Saudis. This has increased the number of unemployed Saudi nationals. Jadara, a new e-employment programme will complement both Saudisation and Nitaqat in the provision of employment in Saudi Arabia.

2.2.5 Schemes improving employability of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia

There are a number of schemes that have specifically been designed to act on the employability of individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the intention of these schemes is to harmonise aspects such as Saudisation by bridging the gap in relation to the rates of employment of people with disabilities. A good example of such a scheme is the Qaderoon Business Disability Network which aims to provide procedural guidance, training, advice and guidance regarding best practices for individuals with disability in Saudi Arabia.

While the effects of the scheme are multifaceted, with regard to the employment and remuneration of individuals with disability the scheme facilitates the recruitment and retention of employees with different forms of disability. Connecting this specific role with the thesis statement as stressed previously, the scheme works in collaboration with already established government policies for the employment of people with disabilities (Al-Lamki, 2010). According to the principles of Saudisation which is geared towards creating jobs for Saudi Arabian citizens, private organisations must limit the number of expatriates taking jobs in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, the Qaderoon Business Disability Network works with multiple stakeholders, including governmental entities, the private sector and non-profit organisations, to reduce foreign intrusion and create jobs for people with disability.

The Qaderoon Business Disability Network is helped by other similar schemes such as the General Organisation for Social Insurance (GOSI) which has been designed as a scheme to support workers or their families in cases of disability. This scheme creates employment for those with disability/disabilities and, in cases where the disability does not allow that person to work, a well-structured compensation

programme can be put into place to benefit family members. In addition, the scheme is also focused on the social rehabilitation of people with disability before they are recruited to work in various sectors or departments. Through collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, GOSI teaches people with disabilities social, educational and vocational skills so that they can enter society as independent, productive individuals. Related to GOSI is the National Old Age, Disability and Survivors Scheme which is a plan that covers employees with disabilities which are the result of occupational hazards.

2.2.6 Government's general action steps in relation to disability in Saudi Arabia

As an Islamic nation, Sharia law in Saudi Arabia advocates the promotion of human rights, especially for those with disabilities. The government has taken some steps in helping people with disabilities, starting by looking at reasons why disability is increasing in the country.

As mentioned earlier blood marriage was found to be the key factor. Since it is traditional it cannot be banned but alternatives have to be found to control the problems that might arise in future. Various steps have been taken to deal with these issues; for instance, in the last two decades the government has put in place measures and allocated finances for the promotion of health facilities for people with disabilities (Saudi Arabia Country Profile on Disability, 2002). Training facilities for people with disabilities and employment laws and policies for them have been developed. The promotion of welfare and social facilities for people with disabilities is a clear indication of positive attitudes towards disability in Saudi Arabia. It is unfortunate that, despite Saudi Arabia being under Islamic Sharia law which puts a great deal of emphasis on human rights especially in relation to individuals with disabilities, such people have remained side-lined and forgotten in their

communities, thus remaining deprived of the humanitarian aid they are entitled to. Despite this challenge, research carried by the Saudi National Survey of Children with Disability under Al- Hazmi estimated that the Ministry of Social Affairs in Saudi spends approximately SR300 million (approximately 50 million GBP) on programmes for people with disabilities (Al- Hazmi, 2000). Besides this, over 600 non-governmental organisations have been established to cater for individuals with disabilities.

Public and private organisations providing employment in Saudi Arabia are well supported by Royal Family members who raise donations and initiate social initiatives to ensure equal and liberal policies are developed for people with disabilities and guarantee a better life for them. Specialised organisations such as hospitals of the National Guard, Military, Social Security and others provide extended services to people with disabilities as a part of their service to those in their catchment area. These services included provision of access materials such as finances and advice on employment of people with disabilities. It has been noted that most of the specialised organisations are extremely sensitive in relation to persons with disabilities (King, 2005).

Research on Saudi Arabia further explains that several royal foundations are acting to develop better infrastructures for people with disabilities and have a strong commitment to provide and generate employment for them as a part of the social welfare system (Kabbara, 2003). However the type and quality of services are still not well-known as these royal foundations in Saudi Arabia are in their developing stages and not fully operational. Funders and philanthropists have recently recognised the need for improved services for people with disabilities in such

institutions, and most contributions have gone into building facilities or infrastructure. Institutions for people with disabilities are more prevalent in urban than in rural areas, with an uneven distribution of facilities that has no relation to the actual distribution of people with disabilities.

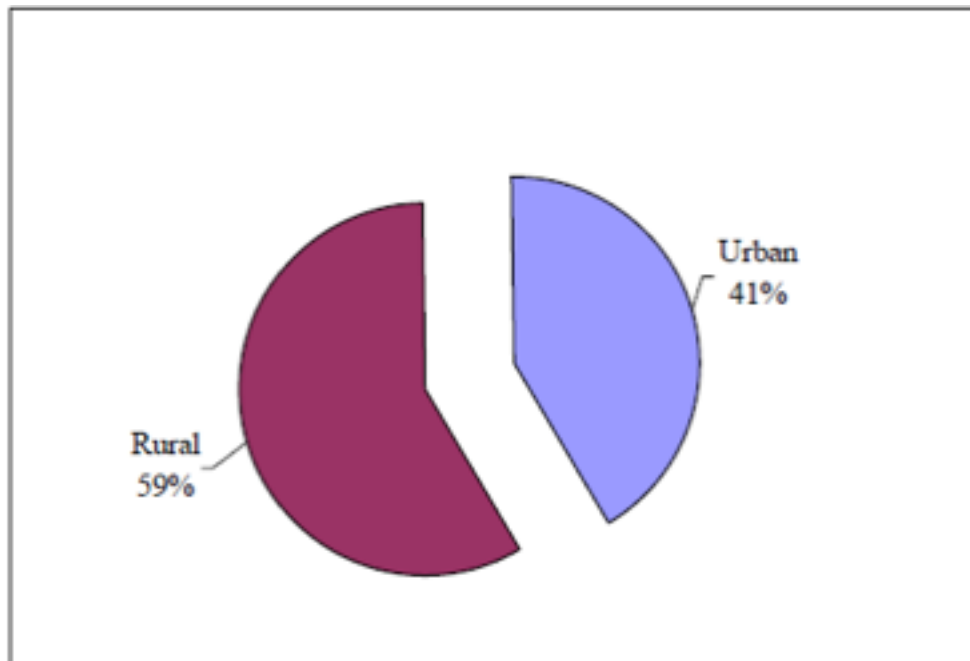


Figure 3: People with disabilities in rural and urban areas in Saudi Arabia

Source: The Economic Bureau, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

2.2.7 Laws, regulations and policies on disability in Saudi Arabia

There are various governmental laws, regulations and policies which have been developed in Saudi Arabia to cater for the employability of people with disabilities. In order to understand employment policies for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, it is important to have a brief understanding of the existing laws, regulations and policies prevailing in the country. Here is a look at various laws, regulations and policies currently prevailing in relation to people with disabilities.

The Labour Code Law was legislated in the year 1969 and focuses mainly on labour rights and on detailed vocational rehabilitation for people with disabilities. The

Basic System Article 27 which was legislated in the year 1992 provides a governmental guarantee for citizens of Saudi Arabia in cases of sickness, emergency, disability or old age by ensuring social security and encouraging agencies and individuals to participate in charitable activities. The Regulation of Rehabilitation Programme No. 1355 looks towards establishing a rehabilitation programme with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs so as to prepare persons with disabilities for employment generation in the country along with providing information about types of services and employment available to persons with disabilities (Al-Lamki, 2007). Decree No. 129 which was legislated in the year 1976 as a policy of the General Department of Rehabilitation seeks to create special programmes for those who could be vocationally trained as well as programmes for those who are not fit to work or are mentally and physically challenged which give them specialised medical and psychological rehabilitation.

The Labour and Workmen Law of the year 1969 seeks to generate employment opportunities for people with disabilities by establishing and organising institutions responsible for the provision of vocational training services to individuals with disability/disabilities. It promotes the employment of persons with disabilities in Article 54 of the written law. The employer shall further be under obligation to send to the Office of Labour and Workmen a statement indicating the jobs and positions occupied by workmen with disabilities who have been vocationally rehabilitated along with the pay rate of each such workman.

The Seventh Development Plan (2001-2005) focuses intensely in introducing strict laws to develop employment policies for people with disabilities and on giving encouragement to co-operatives and charities to develop economic and social

projects and programmes which encourage employment among people with disabilities. The Legislation of Disability was passed in 1987 and was practically the first legislation for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The legislation focused on important provisions and guaranteed people with disabilities equal rights to those of other people in society which also include employment. The Disability Code was passed in the year 2000 by the Saudi government and seeks to ensure that people with disabilities have access to free and proper medical, psychological, social, educational, and employment opportunities through rehabilitation services and public agencies. The Legislation Code further encourages agencies to assist eligible people in the areas of welfare, education, employment, complementary services etc.

Thus we see that Saudi Arabia has already enacted various laws, regulations and policies to ensure a better life for people with disability in the country. These laws, policies and regulations indeed have one common thrust: to provide employment opportunities to people with disabilities and further develop and encourage the development of employment policies for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

2.2.8 Social services and employment policies

The government of Saudi Arabia constantly ensures the provision of the benefits of social services to people with disabilities. Further the Ministry of Labour develops special programmes to deliver social benefits in association with various governmental and private bodies. People with disabilities in Saudi Arabia are provided with a 50% discount for themselves and for a partner for transport. The Ministry of Labour has developed policies to ensure that employment support is provided on a basis equal with that provided for the population of the country who have no disability/disabilities. People with disabilities are given access to parks,

roads and gardens, and educational opportunities are offered to persons with visual, hearing, and speech impairments and intellectual disability through special institutions designed for this purpose and kept under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment (Jamali et al., 2005). The Saudi government also provides a subsidy of SR 10,000 (GBP 1684) for each person with disability/disabilities to modify their car from manual to automatic to facilitate self-employment among the same.

The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs also strive to provide social benefits for persons with disabilities who mostly live with their families. For example, financial aid programmes are run for paralysed children living with their family that provide a maximum allowance of SR 10,000 (GBP 1684) for each paralysed child. There are also aid programmes for persons with disabilities who are cared for by their own families, with a maximum of SR 10,000 (GBP 1684) per annum for severe disabilities and SR 6,000 (GBP 1010) for persons with disabilities who are not benefitting from vocational rehabilitation programmes. Various Social Rehabilitation Centres in the country are designed to provide shelter and to assist people with severe disability/disabilities who are not able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation programmes due to the severity of their disability.

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centres are a new type of rehabilitation centre which combines rehabilitation services in one unit under the control of one single administration. These rehabilitation centres include both vocational sections for vocational rehabilitation and social sections for social rehabilitation for people with severe disabilities. Employment policies are uniquely designed for these Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centres ensuring that once a person who is identified

as having a disability shows any signs of improvement and are better fitted for employment, this is provided for the person with disability; these policies also encourage the governmental and private sector employment councils to ensure that people with disabilities are assigned jobs in the country.

2.2.9 Vocational training and employment promotion services

The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs have established a significant number of Vocational Rehabilitation Centres for persons suffering from any disability. These rehabilitation centres focus on providing people with disabilities proper training and guidance so that they are able to socially and psychologically adapt to the environment thus becoming effective partners in society. The Ministry of Labour along with these vocational rehabilitation centres provide comprehensive training for people with disabilities in various fields such as electrical engineering, book-binding, painting, engraving, sewing, tailoring, computer science, carpentry, dressmaking, and other subjects so as to ensure a better livelihood and further guarantee jobs in the country for persons with disabilities.

The Ebsar Society for Rehabilitation for the Visually Impaired has recently launched a recruitment programme to provide jobs for the visually impaired in the private sector which is run in partnership with Al Rabie Saudi Foods Company, a leading producer of juices and food products in Saudi Arabia. The recruitment programme was successful in its initial stage with 15 visually impaired candidates getting jobs in various positions in the Al Rabie Company. Employment promotion schemes for persons with disabilities are also mandatory per the laws prevailing in Saudi Arabia and ensure more job opportunities for persons with disabilities (Walker, 2009). The International Labour Conference of which Saudi Arabia is an active member also adopted a recommendation concerning workers with diminished capacity or those

who are virtually disabled so that, whatever the origin of the disability, people with disabilities should be provided with full opportunities for specialised vocational guidance, vocational training, functional and occupational training, and employment in useful work.

2.2.10 Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)

Saudi Arabia is one of the twelve (12) Eastern Mediterranean countries that collaborated with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in CRB, planning and implementing national rehabilitation programmes. The WHO has been constantly providing advisory services in Saudi Arabia to improve its employment policies in relation to persons with disabilities. The emphasis is on strengthening the exchange and dissemination of information particularly in relation to CBR along with providing jobs at an international level for people with any disability.

At a glance, the services provided by government, charitable trusts and private institutions seems to be plentiful, seem to meet international standards and to be of high quality, but it could also be said that the provisions of institutionalised services is mostly concentrated on social aggregation rather than on social integration. Public awareness campaigns on the barriers faced by persons with disabilities are necessary to lay strong foundations for transition from institutionalisation to community-based services and rehabilitation services as per international trends. The Ministry of Employment makes continuous efforts to ensure that international standards are maintained so as to ensure that person with disabilities are well trained and equipped with international knowledge and therefore can compete on the international level and deliver an excellent performance in their assigned jobs.

Thus we see that the current economic scenario for Saudi Arabia provides various employment provisions for people with disabilities. However, employment policies still need to be drafted as per international standards and a complete system needs to be developed to ensure that the policies are put into practice in reality.

2.2.11 Labour market position of individuals with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia
 In 2012, nearly 5% of the total population was registered as having severe disability, 47% of which were women (Kashrami, 2003). The majority of the group was already retired and around 1,350,000 had employment in the general labour market. Over 80,000 persons with disability were employed in sheltered workshops and more than 1,500,000 were unemployed (Kashrami, 2003).

Table 3: Age distribution of people registered as having severe disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia in 2012 (Kashrami, 2003)

- 4	4-15	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	55-60	60-65	65+
0.2	1.7	1.9	4.0	6.3	10.0	11.4	13.2	51

The above table based on Kashrami (2003) shows the age distribution of registered and people with severe disability/disabilities in 2012 in Saudi Arabia as percentages (%).

The labour market participation rate for people with severe disabilities for the age group 15 to 25 was found to be 37% whereas the participation rate decreased sharply for older people as the participation rate for individuals with severe disability aged 55 to 60 was nearly 51%. This is low compared to the participation rate for non-disabled people in Saudi Arabia (Kashrami, 2003).

The formal qualifications and education level of unemployed persons with disabilities is on a par with those of other unemployed persons (King, 2005). Thus, it can be concluded that lack of formal education and qualification is not the reason

for lack of integration in the existing labour market of Saudi Arabia, (although the productivity of persons with disability is often reduced). In 2012, the share of individuals with severe disability/disabilities who were unemployed amounted to 4.8% males and 3.5% women which highlights the consideration that the labour market situation for women seemed more favourable although the share of discouraged women with disability/disabilities who are not searching for jobs might be quite high.

The statistics affirm that there are cases where women are becoming empowered. To conceptualise this, as a result of the decree from King Abdullah in January 2013, woman joined the consultative assembly of Saudi Arabia for the first time; which is a very important development because women now have the right to vote (Hanafi, 2008). Furthermore it has been observed that persons with disability who are unemployed have greater difficulties in re-entering the labour market as the duration of unemployment varies in ways that have been highlighted in the table below.

Table 4: Length of unemployment (distribution by percentage)

The concept of specialist integration services has been developed in Saudi Arabia by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The government constantly looks to specialised external services to assist employment offices for the placement of

certain groups of persons with disabilities and to support the various established welfare agencies providing continuous assistance to persons with disability once in employment. This study looks at the outflow from unemployment among persons with disability to provide a better, clearer picture of the same.

Figure 4: Outflow from unemployment in Saudi Arabia, 2012 (distribution by percentage)

It has to be noted that a close co-operation between special schools and the employment office is necessary. In many cases schools do not prepare young people for working life adequately and special pre-training programmes need to be developed. The fourth report of the federal government of Saudi Arabia on people with disabilities further stresses the need for a comprehensive approach in training centres for school leavers with disabilities, especially those with learning disabilities. However, the federal government clearly states that the actual concept should be improved by strengthening the co-operation between all actors involved in vocational training especially in the private sector.

The vocational training rehabilitation centres mainly prioritise adults with a certain amount of work experience who need vocational training and reorientation due to accident, injury and disability. These centres have introduced a reform process for their work in order to enhance their efficiency and the quality of work performed. The process is developed in a systematic manner to ensure that there is close co-operation with the private sector companies of Saudi Arabia, by ensuring that they

develop profiles of professions and qualifications which meet the current labour market requirements as well as transforming the current structure of working patterns.

Table 5: Vocational training measures in Saudi Arabia and their success in 2012

Source: Employment Offices, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Table 6: Vocational training measures and their success in Saudi Arabia, 2012

Source: Employment Offices, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Thus, the above table shows clearly outflows related to rehabilitation measures in Saudi Arabia and indicates the percentage of persons with disability who have not successfully completed a rehabilitation programme amounts to 23.7% which is a warning sign for the government of Saudi Arabia. The government needs to constantly deploy new and effective employment policies to reduce this figure in future years so as to ensure that there is no unemployment among people with disabilities in the country.

As per Saudi Arabia local media as cited by Kosygina (2005), the government is planning to offer private employers incentives to hire 100,000 people with disabilities (Kosygina, 2005). The Ministry of Labour further added that, on the basis of research conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, about 183,000 Saudis with disability/disabilities were still registered as looking for job and employment in the country, and about 100,000 of these would actually be capable of working if they were given proper training and guidance. A new programme named Tawafuk has been devised to ensure employment of people with disability/disabilities and people

with severe disabilities in the private sector of the country which shall be supported and funded by the Human Resource Development Fund.

2.3 Disability and international employment policy adopted by Saudi Arabia

The General Council and the institutions under their supervision are committed to policy and practices in Saudi Arabia which recognise their obligation to meet the international standards of the amended *Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Act No. 135 of 1992*, which is designed to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against people with disabilities at any stage of their employment and to also ensure the following tasks are undertaken (Rispler-Chaim, 2007):

To ensure that people with disabilities are employed in jobs best-suited to their aptitudes, abilities, and qualifications, making any further reasonable adjustments which are necessary for them to be able to do so.

To ensure that people with disabilities are provided with opportunity for promotion in relation to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications, and further making any reasonable adjustments which are necessary for them to be able to do so.

To ensure that regular assessments are carried out in an unbiased and prudent manner out of the scope of reasonable adjustments which may be carried out in the workplace and the general environment so as to make it possible to retain an employee with a disability or to recruit a new person with disability.

To regularly make an audit of the service providers and ensure reasonable adjustments or changes to the workplace and the employment arrangements so as to ensure that a person with disability is not at any substantial disadvantage when the same is compared with a non-disabled person and his

or her employment arrangements which include wages, salary allowances etc.

To assist and help staff and employees who develop a reasonable disability during their employment and to make reasonable changes in their employment arrangements so as to enable them to continue in their positions or post or take up alternative employment in a different company.

2.3.1 International special employment programmes in Saudi Arabia for people with disability/disabilities

Saudi Arabia has responded positively to international measures by recognising that in certain cases positive action is required to bring people with disabilities as members of disadvantage group to the same starting position (Lewis, 2004). Saudi Arabia has adopted special international employment programmes and policies developed for people with disabilities. These programmes indicate that there are certain categories of persons, structures, and inherent or systematic barriers which mitigate against equal participation in the workplace and further these obstacles are actually beyond the control of any particular individual concerned. One such barrier is based on stereotypical negative attitudes (Lewis, 2004). There exist attitudes of fear such as the fear that the cost of accommodating persons with disabilities is too high or that persons with disabilities will be unproductive or fear because of the high cost of vocational training programmes for persons with disabilities. The common element is that they are all based on assumptions focusing on one characteristic of a person with disability rather than the presence of a disability (Kosygina, 2005).

To address these negative economic indicators and significant structural barriers to equitable employment opportunities and integration of persons with disabilities into the forefront of real life, Saudi Arabia has developed a set of policies and

programmes which are directly aimed at promoting equal participation of persons with disabilities in its employment policies. These initiatives can be categorised into two broad arms.

The first is affirmative action which is known in Saudi Arabia as the Employment Equity Programmes, and wage subsidies and vocational training measures from the central government which commonly target four main sections or designated groups: women, native persons, minorities, and people with disabilities. On the other hand, supported programmes, sheltered workshop programmes and disability income support measures have been designed which directly target the persons with disabilities.

However, it is to be noted that Saudi Arabia's programmes, unlike those in other countries adopting special international programmes and policies concerning employment, are not delivered in a coordinated manner through a central agency or department which is concerned with the training and employment of persons with disabilities. Rather policies and programmes in Saudi Arabia are splintered across a myriad of central and provincial agencies and ministries which at times overlap in terms of both programme content and the intended target group. It is to be further noted that they are piecemeal and lack a guiding principle which recognises that community-based coordinating agencies are a significant element of the delivery structure system. Indeed, the situation is worse than the situation in other countries which have adopted international programmes as services are fragmented and very little information is available on where to go for services. Thus, the average person with disabilities lacks any idea of where to start. It is often argued that this lack of overall coordination is a serious drawback and a very real barrier in relation to the

cost effective delivery of Saudi Arabia's employment programmes and policies.

While Saudi Arabia's programmes and policies are fragmented, it has been successful in dealing with the following five areas concerning the problem of low economic outcomes experienced by people with disabilities.

Discriminatory labour market practices exist but can be minimised to ensure maximum benefits to persons with disabilities.

Interventions can help to eliminate disadvantages and problems in the labour market and intervention can help to remove the same.

Support services and rehabilitation centres can help and assist people with disabilities to either overcome personal limitations that affect their labour market participation or can enable the persons with disability to enter the workforce despite these limitations.

Providing persons with disabilities with an opportunity to access the desired and required education and vocational training will help to remove barriers to labour force participation.

2.3.2 Affirmative action

One of the major governmental employment initiatives on behalf of persons with disabilities in Saudi Arabia are the central affirmative action measures. As already noted above, these affirmative actions are commonly referred to in Saudi Arabia as the Employment Equity Programme; however the term affirmative action is more clearly understood at the international level and the same is used in this study. The affirmative action programme is one of the best known and most controversial initiatives in Saudi Arabia.

The affirmative action programme, which comes under the direct jurisdiction of the central government of Saudi Arabia, includes employees who work in enterprises. The Saudi Government has utilised three different approaches to encourage employment through affirmative action. Firstly, anti-discrimination legislation at the central level; the Saudi Arabia Human Rights Act contains a section which requires enterprises and firms not subject to the Employment Equity Act to ensure and establish voluntary Employment Equity Programmes. Secondly the government of Saudi Arabia has implemented uniform legislation which makes it mandatory for any enterprise or firm or organisation employing more than 100 employees under federal or central jurisdiction to be committed to employment equity schemes and their regulations. Finally, under the Central Contractor Programme, companies who have workforces of more than 100 employees and wish to do business with the federal government of Saudi Arabia must, in exchange for being awarded contracts exceeding a pre-fixed value, agree to develop and implement an employment equity programme. It is to be further noted that the Saudi Arabia Human Rights Act merely authorises individual enterprises to engage in such positive measures and these are no organised programmes for affirmative action.

As is common in most of countries across the globe, in Saudi Arabia there are schemes to ensure employment for persons with disability, which are known here as 'Nitaqat'. The Saudi Arabia governmental programmes for persons with disabilities seek to create an equitable workforce. In other words, if it is determined that 5 percent of the qualified computer programmers in general population are suffering from a disability, than 5 percent of the computer programmers which any ABC company employs should also have disability/disabilities. Hence it is mandatory for organisations in Saudi Arabia to report the percentage of persons with

disability/disabilities employed in their enterprise as a whole as well as in a specific occupational category.

The Saudi Arabian affirmative action legislation calls upon the employers to ensure that the following duties and responsibilities are fulfilled with regard to employment promotion of persons with disability (Kashrami, 2003):

To ensure the elimination of any such practices and general policies that result in systematic and structural employment barriers for persons with disabilities.

To institute measures ensuring that persons with disabilities and who belong to any of the four categorised groups which are subject to employment equity law achieve a degree of representation in the various positions of employment with the employer to ensure that the same is proportionate to their representation in the workforce.

To prepare yearly and half-yearly plans which clearly outline the employment equity goals that the employer proposes to achieve as well as the systematic presentation of the timetables for implementing the same.

It is to be noted that the legislation brings organisations and enterprises employing 100 or more employees under central jurisdiction, with a few exceptions as declared by the government of Saudi Arabia from time to time based on the current general environmental conditions and scenarios as it deems fit.

2.4 Civil service system of Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Civil Service was established in 1999 with Dr. Muhammad bin Ali-Feyez as its first minister. The ministry is vested with the power to plan and organise

the civil work force required by the government in order to ensure that the recruited civil servants' competencies match the required skills and that hence that they will be able to implement the various development plans and programmes (Al-Salloum, 2012).

The law governing the operations of civil servants is based on Royal Decree Number 49 of 1977 which was launched as a civil service regulation. Pages 1 to 10 of the Um Al Qura, Ministerial Council Decree Number 178 of 1999 gives the regulation on how the management of civil service of Saudi Kingdom is to be organised (Al-Salloum, 2012). Thus all civil servants in Saudi Kingdom are ranked according to grade, and advancement depends on merit and seniority of the position applied for. The promotions of staff members and staff evaluation is done in accordance with the civil service rules and regulations. Each employee of the government must aim at attaining the highest level of excellence in terms of service delivery to citizens (Al-Salloum, 2012).

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) is tasked with providing short courses for the civil servants of Saudi Arabia. This is mainly to ensure that the public servants' skills remain relevant to the current technological trends in the country and the world in general. Most females employed in Arabian Civil Service are working in the service sector, mostly in education, healthcare and other social services within the country. While no women has ever occupied a ministerial or legislative post in the Saudi government, many of them hold sub-cabinet and senior government positions mostly in the education, health and social services sectors.

People with disability are largely ignored in the civil service sector with very little legislation protecting them. Working days in the public sector run from Saturday to

Thursday starting at 7:30 AM and continuing to 2:30 PM. The official holidays include Eid Al-Fitr, Eid-Al-Adha and the Kingdom's National Day. The law dictates the public civil servants retirement age is 60 for men and 55 for women. Government employees are given medical insurance and retirement benefits. They benefit from vacation and annual leave that is fully paid. They are granted 36 days leave a year, and maternity leave of sixty days minimum from the date of birth of the child. Civil servants are entitled to full salary for sick leave of six months, half salary for the second six months, and a quarter salary for the following six months, with no salary for the following six months (Rispler-Chaim, 2007).

Educational leave is given to civil servants in Saudi Arabia where permanent employees are given 14 days and contracting employees are given seven days per academic year. Every employee is entitled to emergency leave of not more than 5 days in any fiscal year. Infant care vacation is given of a maximum of three years and depends on the employees' time of service with government. Accompanying leave can also be granted by the government if the wife or husband of any of the employees is going to study outside the country. The leave will be unpaid for a maximum of six years (Rispler-Chaim, 2007).

2.5 Saudisation

Saudisation which is known as Nitaqat in Arabic, or the Saudi nationalisation scheme, is the most recent policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and has been implemented by the Ministry of Labour. Saudi companies and enterprises are required to fill their workforce with a certain proportion of Saudi nationals. It calls for an increase in the percentage of Saudis of total employment and for work opportunities for Saudi women and young to be expanded (Jarviluoma, 2008).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the world's leading exporter of petroleum and petroleum products, making it one of the richest nations in the Middle East; the country has carried out major economic reforms and has a great deal of political influence in the region. In 1999, the country joined the World Trade Organisation after economic reforms in the regions. The largest part of the country's population consists of young people aged forty years and below (Rispler-Chaim, 2007).

The government set up a number of supporting entities that include ones that promoted human resource management and development to drive the policy of Saudisation in the early 1990s. Funds and corporative training were also provided along with other training scheme for Saudis. "Saudi workers shall not comprise less than 75% of the total number of the company/establishment [and] workers and their wages shall not be less than 5% of the total wages of workers" (Article 45 of the Labour and Workman Law of Saudi Arabia) (Rispler-Chaim, 2007).

"The employer shall vocationally train his/her Saudi workers to replace foreign workers" and the "employer shall keep a register in which he shall record the names of the Saudi workers who have replaced non-Saudis." (Article 45 of the Labour and Workmen Law of Saudi Arabia (Rispler-Chaim, 2007). These laws will ensure adequate distribution of labour and the workforce within the country.

2.5.1 Nitaqat programme in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Labour in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has incorporated the Nitaqat programme which simply means ranges in Arabic in order to increase the number of job opportunities for the citizens of the Kingdom in the private sector. The Nitaqat programme involves direct government intervention which aims at obtaining quick results and also giving the nationals of Saudi Arabia a better chance in the local job

markets that is currently dominated by foreign employees who account for up to 90% of the total people employed in the private sector (Al-Salloum, 2012).

The Nitaqat programme replaces the national job programme which was known as Saudisation. Unlike Nitaqat, the Saudisation programme followed a blanket approach in which the law required that 30% of employment opportunities should be allocated to Saudi natives in private companies irrespective of economic activity and company size. Under the Nitaqat programme, the government takes time to evaluate private sector organisations based on their nationalisation performance which is measured by calculating the percentage of Saudi Arabia nationals employed by the firm (Al-Salloum, 2012). The nationalisation performance of the companies is always calculated on a moving average method over a successive period of 13 weeks. Based on the performance relative to their economic activity and the size, the entities will be classified into four major bands that include excellent, green, yellow or red.

Table 7: Classification of private companies

<p>Excellent</p> <p>Entities achieving superior nationalisation performance with the highest percentage of local employees</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Entities achieving good nationalisation performance, with a good percentage of local employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and excellent companies represent the most important entities with the same size and level of economic activity
<p>Yellow</p> <p>Entities achieving below average performance with a lower percentage of local employees</p>	<p>Red</p> <p>Entities achieving poor nationalisation performance, hiring the lowest percentage of local employees.</p> <p>These firms represent the bottom one fifth percentile of entities with the same size and level of economic activity.</p>

2.5.2 Jadara programme in Saudi Arabia

This is the same as the Saudi e-government programme which is also known as Yesser. It was first introduced in 2005 with the first action plan in the year 2006. It coordinated a decentralised approach with a unified vision and action plan and

shared infrastructure in relation to common standards and practices (Al-Salloum, 2012).

Initially, the action plan was driven by:

Ambitious vision as a catalyst for e-government

Providing common applications for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of government

Providing a refined level of government services for individuals, businesses and government

Building infrastructure with high reliability (data + technical) to provide state-of-the-art services

Establishing enabling programmes to facilitate e-government advancement in effective and needed ways

The Single Sign-On (SSO) for enterprises and individuals is considered to be one of the most significant regulations intending to implement e-government transactions issued within the Cabinet's resolution. It was designed to:

Inspire and reward change

Enhance public involvement

Act as an effective “lever of change”

The Jadara programme vision aimed to enable everyone to use effective government services, in a secure, integrated and simple way, using multiple electronic channels.

All ministries were incorporated in this plan including the Ministry of Labour. The Ministry of Labour has called on unemployed Saudi jobseekers to apply for

unemployment benefits, or Hafiz, by sending in their names and identity card numbers via short message service (SMS), or by registering on the ministry's website (Al-Salloum, 2012). The Ministry of Civil Service's Jadara Programme for e-Recruitment records those who want to be recruited in this way and are willing to be recruited through its new "Jadara" programme. This is a recruitment programme for male and female citizens in the public sector. Both individuals with disability/disabilities and others are encouraged to apply for jobs through online services.

2.6 Glimpse into the Labour Law of Saudi Arabia

The Labour Law of Saudi Arabia provides for special articles which specifically deal with employment policies for persons with disabilities. Article 51 of the Labour and Workman Law defines the actual meaning of "disability". Article 52, defines the meaning of vocational rehabilitation as the services provided to people with disabilities to enable them to regain their capacity to perform the original task or any other similar task which best suits them as per their prevailing condition.

Article 53 of the Labour and Workmen Law emphasises setting up necessary institution that shall be established by the Ministry of Labour in agreement with other ministries to provide vocational training service for people with disabilities. Such institutions shall further ensure that workmen with disabilities who have been rehabilitated shall be given a certificate confirming rehabilitation. The information to be contained in such a certificate shall be determined by the decision of the Ministry of Labour. Article 54, which has already been described in the paper, is intended to provide an employment promotion scheme which further aims at creating employment for people with disabilities in firms who employ 50 or more workmen, and furthermore those whose work allows them to employ workmen with

disability/disabilities shall employ 2% of the total workmen by nomination from employment offices or otherwise. Article 55 of the Labour and Workmen Law states that if a workman sustains an injury during his work process which results in his disablement and which does not prevent him/her from performing a job other than his/her previous job, then the employer in whose service such an injury occurred shall assign such a workman a suitable job at a salary fixed for such job which shall be without any prejudice to the workman's right to compensation from his/her injury.

Since the time of the beginning of the first Saudi state in the 18th century, through the time of the founding father, King Abdulaziz bin Abdelrahman Al-Saud, Islamic law has been the pillar and source of Saudi Arabia's basic system of public administration (Kregel & Unger, 1993). In 1953, Saudi Arabia's council was established by a decree that was issued by the son of the King. For the effective administration of the public sector, twenty government ministries were formed between 1950 and 1960. King Fahd introduced new basic laws in 1992 to help with public governance and regulation and the provincial legal system and set up Majlis Al-Shura, which was a consultative council (Kregel & Unger, 1993). Additionally, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has the largest petroleum reserves in the world and is one of the largest exporters of petroleum. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 75% of the country's total revenue, 32.7% of GDP, and 88% of the earnings from the export sector.

The public statistics has it that one fourth of the Saudi Arabia population are non-Saudis (Al-Salloum, 2012). Non-Saudis represent two thirds of the total civilian labour force and their share exceeds 90 % in the private sector (Al-Salloum, 2012).

The Quran (the holy book of Islam) is the supreme constitution of Saudi Arabia; however because it does not contain any specific precepts regarding day-to-day management of public matters, the rulers of Saudi Arabia have promulgated new regulations that are to apply to public administration. These were compiled by King Fahd in 1992 and later named as the basic law (Al-Salloum, 2012).

In public administration, the King combines the executive and legislative functions as well as serving as the ultimate source of judicial power in Saudi Arabia (Al-Salloum, 2012). However, the King is limited in how he performs these functions by Islamic law, royal family consensus, and the traditional consultation forum. On matters which deal with significant public policy, the King must seek agreement from the senior religious leaders, political elites, senior princes, and important tribal families (Al-Salloum, 2012).

The basic principal office is the Royal Diwan; the King occasionally convenes his Majlis. The main functions of the Majlis are to make the King accessible to the citizens of Saudi by means of public personal appeals. The complainants normally ask for the King's assistance with bureaucratic problems within the public arena. The King is vested with the responsibility of drafting regulations and issues royal decrees from this office (Rispler-Chaim, 2007). Recently, there has been an instance where the king held the position of prime minister and was assisted by two deputy prime ministers and a council of minister, all of whom had been appointed by him. He has the right to convene, dissolve and reorganise the consultative council and the council of the ministers (Rispler-Chaim, 2007). The governors are appointed by the King and report directly to him. Most of the governors are members of the house of Al-Saud, the Royal Family (Rispler-Chaim, 2007).

Saudi Arabia was a country of immense diversity in terms of culture until the period after the 1973-1974 oil boom. Due to the small population of the country in early 1970s the Kingdom suffered from having a small market that denied small local producers the advantage of economies of scale. Furthermore, since producers are wide-spread and geographically dispersed, they suffer from having relatively high transportation and communication costs, which tend to limit opportunities for production-based export trade in the private sector (Kabbara, 2003).

Government public expenditure positively impacted on the private sector development of Saudi Arabia due to the fact that only the government can spend large amounts of capital expenditure on infrastructures such as roads and communication which will reduce the costs of doing business in Saudi Arabia. Both the private and public sectors must work collaboratively to improve the economic development of the country. They also employ people equally in various departments, with the public sector having the largest percentage in terms of employment.

2.7 Active labour market employment policy for persons with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia

The Active Labour Market Employment Policy (ALMEP) is a core aspect of the Saudi Arabian Employment Strategy. This policy also caters for marginalised communities such as people with disabilities. This policy aims to develop a passive integration of people in the labour market. Passive integration means securing employment for people have acquired appropriate qualifications from different learning institutions. Looking at equality in society, the need for an effective ALMEP is of prime importance. This policy helps persons with disability/disabilities to actively and easily enter or remain in the labour market. ALMEP can have an impact on both

demand and supply of labour from people with disabilities (Walston, Al-Harbi & Al-Omar, 2008). The policies are so designed as to help people with disabilities to distinguish between elements such as regular employment, sheltered employment and other types of rehabilitation and training.

Table 8: Spending on supported employment and ALMEP

Year 2012	Supported Employment /			ALMEP	
	Rehabilitation				
	Mill. SR	% of GDP	%of ALMEP	Mill. SR	% of GDP
Saudi Arabia	0.08	0.003	1.70%	42.5	0.18%

Source: Extract from Saudi Arabian Database

Reported spending on ALMEP with regards to disability varies considerably among Middle Easter countries since employment policies are differently designed in each country. The Ministry of Labour in Saudi Arabia has been looking into continuously developing employment policies to provide more and more jobs for people with disabilities in the country. The types of jobs mainly allocated to people with disabilities are legislators, senior officers and managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerks, skilled workers, and elementary occupations etc. Table 9 below shows the percentage of different types of jobs which people with disabilities have by occupation which are a result of core ALMEP policies enacted by the government of Saudi Arabia.

Table 9: Types of jobs for persons with disability/disabilities (percentage of prevalence by occupation)

Legislators senior officials and managers	Profes- sionals	Technicians and associate profess- ionals	Clerks	Service workers and shop and market sales	Skilled agricultural and fisheries	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Elemen- tary occu- pation	U n - known
6.5	5.7	7.0	7.1	6.2	8.6	7.5	8.9	11.4	18.7

The Disabled Persons Employment Act requires persons with a degree of disability of at least 50% to be registered to qualify for the associated benefits. Although registration is voluntary classification follows medical criteria. Although it is widely acknowledged that persons with disability/disabilities are more likely to be unemployed, it is difficult to demonstrate this using official data published by the government of Saudi Arabia. In the context of Saudi Arabian employment, people with disability are registered in the following two different ways (Rosenberg & Brady, 2002)

The public employment service registers a person as having a disability/disabilities if the disability reflects or highlights a major difficulty in obtaining a suitable job. The assessment of the same is conducted by highly qualified governmental staff who have obtained experience at international levels and to international standards (Rosenberg & Brady, 2002).

A person with disability has an official medical assessment of the handicap and is thereby subjected to various provisions of the Disabled Persons Employment Act and promotion possibilities resulting from the same.

People with disability are greatly affected by unfavourable developments in the

labour markets. Disability is closely correlated to age which also acts as a hindrance in providing suitable jobs for persons with disabilities. The reasons for high rates of unemployment among persons with disabilities in Saudi Arabia can be summarised as follows:

The education level of the person with a disability is not up to the standard demands and norms of the industry; further the demand for unskilled labour is declining with the modern use of machines and technologies in every industrial field.

Large scale enterprises which include both private and public service enterprises are constantly cutting down on personnel.

The person with disability has a sense of internal fear about his or her own life; further the worries of their families worsen the situation.

There is a lack of information in Saudi Arabia regarding promotion and possibilities in relation to employment for persons with disabilities (Rosenberg & Brady, 2002).

2.8 Women in Saudi Arabia

Finally in this chapter I need to discuss the position of women in Saudi Arabia. This is partly because the circumstances in Saudi Arabia are so unusual for a Western readership but also because my personal circumstances as a woman researcher in Saudi Arabia had a huge impact on the way that I was able to collect my data; this will be subject to further and detailed reflection in the methodology.

Saudi Arabia's interpretation of Islam imposes restrictions on the working conditions and independence of women. Women face various challenges in carrying out their functions and this has been a significant factor in my research. A woman carrying

out research faces challenges with interview respondents and, in general, data collection and compilation. Muslim women in Saudi Arabia have boundaries imposed by their culture and religion.

Social relations between men and women in Saudi Arabia are governed by an interpretation of Islamic Law in which women are understood to have specific roles in relation to both society and family. It is important to understand that what in the West might be seen as oppressive is seen within some interpretations of Islam as both protective and enabling. For example there is a requirement for Saudi women when in public to cover their whole bodies with a cape called an 'abayaa' and to cover their hair with a scarf; in some regions they are also required to cover their faces.

Whilst this is seen as abhorrent in much of Western society, it is seen as normal religious tradition in Saudi Arabia. Some of the rules associated with such practices are complex and difficult for foreigners to understand; in some regions women are required to cover their faces, while in other regions they only cover their hair. This depends not only on the region but also on the family and small differences in religious beliefs. As another example, all government buildings and private sector organisations have separate buildings for each gender and there are boundaries in the relation to the protocol of communicating with the opposite sex. Women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia and the common mode of transportation is either to be driven by a male member of the family or a hired driver depending on social status, as public transportation is of a very poor standard and not commonly used by native Saudis, which makes mobility for women a difficult issue. While in the West the argument relates to the social model being an effective instrument in

liberating people with disabilities (Shakespeare, 2001), in Saudi Arabia we still argue for the right to equality for woman. That is why it is important to explain the situation of woman in Saudi Arabia.

In terms of my role as a researcher there are a number of issues that are obstacles in the process that would not be issues in the West. The rules that ensure that women and men who are not part of the same family do not meet together, either privately or publicly, have a significant effect on researchers who may need to interview people regardless of gender. Likewise the rules that ensure that women are not put in the position of being alone with men who are not members of their family without a third party complicates processes that would be straightforward in other countries. Thus women will for example use drivers who are men to transport them since driving is not allowed for woman.

Whilst such social norms have had an enormous effect on the practicalities of conducting research in Saudi Arabia, they are also important in understanding the lives of men and women with disability/disabilities. Both aspects of this will be explored in later chapters within the context of this research which is sponsored by the government of Saudi Arabia; both practice and text of the research has needed to conform to the norms of the country.

Chapter Three- Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The literature review for this topic was multifaceted as it covered material on disability and employment from Saudi Arabia as well as from the West. To analyse this and provide a clear understanding of the topic under discussion, the review of the literature has been divided into three main sections: laws and regulations that are affected by the Islamic religion and the special social characteristics in Saudi Arabia that affect people with disabilities, and an analysis of the literature available about disability in Saudi Arabia,, current statutes in Saudi Arabia regarding services provided for people with disabilities, and Western literature regarding disability in the East in general. Although there is limited literature on the social model of disability in the Saudi context it is still an important topic that relates to this thesis.

As the context of this thesis was Saudi Arabia, it is of significant importance to have a detailed look at the literature related to disability in Saudi Arabia which shall provide guidance regarding the desired direction and help in finding out the focus of earlier studies along an indication of the missing contents of earlier studies. Hence the first section of this literature review focuses on a detailed analysis of the literature related to the Islamic view of disability in Saudi Arabia. The second section derives a platform from the first discussed section and is concerned with research about disability within Saudi Arabia.

The two sections are of significant importance as the study was conducted in Saudi Arabia and adds to the body of knowledge about disability in Saudi Arabia and opportunities for employment based on the promulgated policies. It is also important to focus on how disability is presented in the entire research and whether this study will contribute something positively in a way which is similar to or different from

the existing disability research conducted in the context of Saudi Arabia. The study is focused on Western literature studying disability in an Eastern context. The point is the study intends to critically review literature related to the employability of people with disabilities. Thus, it is important to be aware of the Western research in this area. This body of knowledge will definitely add some interesting and valuable points that will contribute to the better understanding of the entire topic under study.

The third section of the literature review focuses on the discussion of the understanding of the social model of disability in Saudi Arabia.

The literature review relating to disability in Saudi Arabia has been designed in a systematic manner so as to ensure that it provides a contextual framework that helps in understanding the methodology and analysis of the thesis in an easier and more straightforward manner.

3.2 Islamic Views on People with Disabilities

Since Islam is the main religion in Saudi Arabia this affects the policy since it is adapted from Sharia Islamic law, it is important to look at the literature available within the topic of the Islamic view off people with disabilities.

People with disabilities in Saudi Arabia have fallen prey to stereotypical social misconceptions, labelling and different forms of prejudice. These attitudes have prompted mistreatment, exclusion, deprivation of the right to equal educational and employment and other essential services (Elsheikh, 2013). However, Islam is opposed to exclusion and prejudice against any group, as it teaches it is against the will of God.

The Holy Book of the Quran describes human beings as having been created from a

single couple, a man and a woman, and divided into different tribes that make different nations (Selway, 1998). This implies that human beings are equal and no one should be discriminated against on the basis of race, tribe or physical conditions. Islam endeavours to embrace every individual as equal with the same love and warmth and this should not change in the event of a disability. What matters in Islam is ones' heart (Selway, 1998).

The Quran states that it is the responsibility and duty of everyone to take care of others and serve their needs (The Holy book of the Quran). In this regard, Islamic law requires that all groups of people be allowed equal opportunities in life, and this includes in areas such as employment and access to other necessary services such as education, regardless of their nature (Guvercin, 2008). This implies that Muslims embrace a culture of inclusion, and people with disabilities are to be actively taken into consideration in the job market. What matters is their unique skills and ability to deliver on a particular job. It is unfortunate to say that this does not play out in this way in real life; a significant number of people with disabilities are unemployed in Saudi Arabia (Bosbait, 2005), further, more should be done to ensure the ideal becomes a reality.

Regardless of policies and changes that have been ratified in Saudi Arabia, scholars have continued to voice their concern regarding challenges that are faced by people with disabilities. For instance, Al-Gain and Abdulwahab (2002) while researching on *"Issues and obstacles in disability research in Saudi Arabia"* recognise that the biggest challenge that affects the employability of people with disabilities is the lack of what they term "appropriate epidemiological research" (p.2). That is, when awareness about the patterns, causes, and effects of the health and condition of

people with disabilities has not been created, then it becomes very difficult for the policies that have been set out to target the right group. This research has been supported by Algain (2002) when he argued that since nobody knows about the distribution or the actual number of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, then information specialists and the government may face difficulties in dealing with incidences of unemployment among people with disabilities.

Al-Gain and Abdulwahab (2002) also captured another critical issue, which is the nature of research that has been conducted on the employability of people with disabilities in all regions in Saudi Arabia. These scholars observe that the research touching on people with disabilities and their prospects of employment have been based on survey research with little information on the trends in such employment. It is a challenge which Al-Gain and Abdulwahab (2002) argue must be met; they also stress that issues should be examined in terms of what they term “intervention management or early identification of disability” (p.2). The limitation of what Al-Gain and Abdulwahab discuss is whether the so called “intervention management or early identification of disability” will be able to provide validity and reliability when it comes to the comparison of the outcomes of different reports from the literature regarding the segregation of people with disabilities in different employment sectors, especially women.

This argument is in line with what Kashrami (2003) established. Citing studies from the National Research on Disability in Saudi Arabia, Kashrami (2003) argues that, although inclusion programmes have been started, there are no clear statistics from researchers on the incidences of people with disability in almost all regions—something that makes the implementation of the set policies almost impossible. To

conceptualise these arguments, recent regional surveys regarding the employability of people with disabilities show that the incidences are higher in urban than in rural areas (Fadel, 2010). This report therefore reflects even more accurate reporting practices as documented by Al-Gain and Abdulwahab (2002).

In connection with the arguments above, Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) through their study identified a different issue for discussion when they researched “*Disabled Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.*” Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) capture a social model of disability and management of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Here the common theme is that the understanding of people with disabilities is skewed to such an extent that a different notion has been created about people with disabilities so that they are taken into consideration less often in the job market. In “*Disabled Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*” the scholars state that the issue of future employability of people with disabilities is obscure owing to the fact that the definitions or attributes ascribed to individuals with disabilities fails to accommodate their needs, and as such makes potential employers refrain from giving them due consideration (Elshiek, 2013).

The best way to understand the sensitivity of this issue is to link this research to Western literature on the incidences of people with disabilities and their employment in Saudi Arabia. Beginning with Scalengh (2006) who researched “*Being Different: Intersexuality, Blindness, Deafness and Madness in Ottoman Syria*”, the cornerstone of the argument conceptualises what Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) argue in the sense that the label or physical and mental characteristics attributed to people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia make potential employers refrain from considering them regardless of policies set to guide their employability.

While Scalengh (2006) and Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) have brought to the surface several issues pertinent to employment of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, the importance of Islam as a culture and religion has not been captured in their studies because it would have given their stance a different view owing to the fact that there are already a myriad of studies that see Islam as a religion that truly supports people with disabilities (Rispler-Chaim, 2007; Walker, 2009; Scalengh, 2006). Nonetheless, an interesting point to consider regarding the “*Disabled Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*” as postulated by Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) is the view on obstacles facing disability research and disability database systems.

The research argues that researchers investigating incidences of people with disabilities face challenges owing to the fact that what they term “inbreeding due to relative marriages” (p. 3) is prevalent in Saudi society. Inbreeding according to the research is where people marry close relatives, which according to biologists may be a cause for some forms of disability (Walker, 2009). The challenge for researchers according to Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) is a lack of appropriate demographic studies on disability. Connecting this argument to the thesis statement, it becomes difficult to understand trends among unemployed people with disabilities. What the future should hold for people with disabilities according to Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) is that employers should refrain from using degrading or destructive terminologies that depersonalise or deny people with disabilities their employment rights.

Speaking of attitudes, scholars have investigated the contributions men have made towards denying or promoting women's employment in Saudi Arabia (Al-Quraini, 2007; Walker, 2009). While Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) have a general perspective

about the future of the people with disabilities, investigation into male attitudes towards working females in Saudi Arabia seems to be a dominant topic in contemporary studies that has sought to link hypotheses of previous studies that touched on issues such as social services and employment policies or educational systems and employment policies for people with disabilities (Walker, 2009).

Elamin and Omair (2010) are examples of scholars who have offered various insights regarding the employment of people with disabilities and how men contribute towards the segregation of women in employment. While researching "*Males' attitudes towards working females in Saudi Arabia*" they found that one of the challenges female potential employees face is what Elamin and Omair (2010) term the "patriarchal nature of most organisations" (p.3). While this view has also been supported in research such as Walker (2009), the connectedness this has with the thesis statement is that policies that are made to streamline the employment of people with disabilities should first streamline attitudes males have towards their female counterparts. For instance, Abdulwahab (2001) reports that female workers with disabilities in organisations have been blocked from advancing in organisational hierarchies as they are traditionally not supposed to occupy certain posts and work as males' superiors.

This issue is critical in the realisation of an ideal policy that can streamline employment of people with disabilities, especially women. While the limitations that affect the progress of women in different organisations across the world are myriad and well documented in the research reviewed thus far, issues such as gender stereotyping, biases when it comes to female recruitment, and restrained female role models are rampant in Saudi Arabia with the major cause being the poor

attitudes of male colleagues as dictated by culture (Elamin & Omair, 2010). Though Elamin and Omair fail to show the relationship between the rights of men and women as dictated by culture, the overall trend has been evidenced by recent official reports and publications that revolve around the idea that the participation of women and people with disabilities in the labour market has been significantly low across all regions in Saudi Arabia and the difference between Saudi Arabia and other developed countries is evident (Al-Quraini, 2007).

Additionally, of the critical factors Elamin and Omair (2010) believe brings about the poor attitude towards women is the patriarchal power relation. They argue that the situation has been made worse owing to the fact that there are some policies that give women with disabilities a soft landing when it comes to promotion. Al-Quraini (2007) summarises this debate by adding that Islamic feminist scholars can be categorised into the modern and the traditional. While traditional scholars are satisfied by women who stay at home to attend to domestic chores, the modern ones feel that women, regardless of their physical attributes or attitudes shown, should stand firm in order to take employment opportunities that were once left for men.

The attitude as discussed by Elamin and Omair (2010) has even stretched to health care providers. Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) discuss "*Attitudes of Saudi Arabian health care professionals towards people with physical disabilities*". While this research was embedded in aspects of disabilities, a review of it helps this research understand demographics challenges faced by people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, that is, Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) provide a convenient and effective tool for evaluating attitudes towards people with disabilities with respect to their employability in Saudi Arabia.

A general finding from Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) was that Saudi Arabian professionals and allied health care providers have a positive attitude towards people with physical disability in Saudi Arabian health care services. While this research does not directly correlate with the thesis statement of the research, it helps in disputing the idea generally held that there is a poor attitude towards individuals with disability in Saudi Arabia. In addition, Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) conceptualise the fact that the government's efforts to provide measures and finances for the promotion of health facilities for those with disability/disabilities has generated positive reactions regarding people with disabilities (see report by Saudi Arabia Country Profile on Disability, 2002).

Al-Lamki's (2007) study indicated that the ages and the poor health conditions of the mothers were the major reasons for the birth of a child with various mental and physical disabilities (Al-Lamki, 2007; Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, 2004). Therefore through the findings of Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) they recommend the importance of increasing knowledge about disabilities as awareness is a main factor in promoting a positive attitude towards disability.

The only limitation with the argument put forward by Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) is that the individuals reported to have experienced good treatment or attitudes regarding people with disabilities are the ones who to some extent, wanted to develop a good relationship with medical personnel, especially in cases where they had chronic infections. This may be taken to mean that the health personnel the research used as the sample see disability in accordance with their personal experience. It is therefore difficult for policy makers to establish special employment programmes within Saudi Arabia based on what Al-Abdulwahab and Al-

Gain (2003) discuss.

This study recommends that in as much as there is a need for a positive attitude to be expressed toward people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, the most important step is to create national awareness so that the job market can appreciate them, as is the case with health professionals who developed a positive attitude because of their level of awareness as reported by Al- Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) which would indicate the need for the levels of awareness of employers and co-workers to increase. In addition this awareness should include the awareness of the abilities of those with disabilities.

It has to be noted that based on studies from scholars such as Rispler-Chaim (2007) and Hanafi (2008) attitudes towards people with disabilities is a multifaceted issue, since the awareness of the disability is not enough encouragement to the workforce to change their attitudes when the abilities of those people with disabilities is a secondary factor that is rarely acknowledged, yet their disability is their main characteristic.

As such, it remains a debatable topic among scholars, therefore, looking at it in relation to the attitudes of medical practitioners may not solve issues with regard to the employability of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The critical issue with attitude stretches beyond what Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) term "... the variation in attitudes towards people with disabilities result[ing] from cultural values, traditional beliefs, educational environment, religion, age, working experience and sex" (p.3). When the situation is different, if the social model was applied, society will be encouraged to include people regardless of their individual differences, and as a result people will begin to understand the fact that disability

does not mean inability.

Conversely, understanding policies developed for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia needs a critical literature search and review of gender and culture within different regions. While it has already been established that females face social challenges (restriction on social interactions such as conversing with male colleagues in private or enclosed places) in Saudi Arabia, it is also apparent that the situation might be worse for people who are suffering from disabilities.

To understand the situation and connect it to the thesis statement of this research, it is essential to understand gender and culture in an ethnographic study. It is on this basis that research by Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) discusses the understanding of policies that seek to create jobs for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. In their research on *“Researching ‘at Home’ as an Insider/Outsider Gender and Culture in an Ethnographic Study of Social Work Practice in an Arab Society”*, one of the critical issues discussed is the challenge of gaining access to data collection when researching.

Under the sub-topic “Gaining Access and Gender Issues”, the research notes that there is a challenge for women when it comes to accessing job markets and that this was apparent in the difficulties faced when the research wanted to obtain data. Though it is noted that natives have little challenge in interacting with females or the Arabian society at large, the findings in this study show that females face challenges accessing job markets –something that other researches has failed to consider in their recommendation for policies for employment for Saudi Arabian women with disability/disabilities (Abdulwahab, 2001).

In particular Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) note that “...with male

patients for example, I kept my distance not getting close to them, touching or looking at them directly in the eye... I was aware that being an unmarried female researcher might have been a possible limitation in negotiating access. Participants and gatekeepers could have viewed me as a female lacking in experience” (p. 11). It is therefore important that the policies aimed at streamlining employment for people with disabilities must also consider how to eliminate some of the restrictions imposed by culture which as such make life difficult for females with disability/disabilities seeking employment in the public or private sectors. Labaree (2002) as cited in Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) noted that restrictions on sharing of culture between females and males have strongly prohibited females from accessing employment regardless of their physical attributes or educational background. The research from Labaree (2002) and Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) provides insights on restrictions female workers face as hospital social workers, nurses, doctors and patients. Connecting these studies with the thesis statement, there is a need to bring gender issues into sharper focus so that when policies on employment of people with disabilities are implemented, ones for females are considered effectively.

Furthermore, restrictions female researchers face in Arabic countries, in particular in Saudi Arabia seems to be more than those which Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) have captured. Contemporary research such as that of Ahmed et al. (2010) shows that restrictions female researchers have even restrict proper implementation of policies that aim to streamline employment in Saudi Arabia, particularly for individuals with disabilities. While researching on *“Issues of Gender, Reflexivity and Positionality in the Field of Disability: Researching Visual Impairment in an Arab Society”*, there were a number of restrictions imposed by

culture in Saudi Arabia to an extent that such policies for employment of people with disabilities should first consider whether the employment sectors have been modified to meet the sensitivity and sensibility of given social groups and settings. The researches of Al-Makhamreh and Lewando-Hundt (2008) and Ahmed et al. (2010) have been reviewed not only to highlight challenges the implementation of policies for people with disabilities may face but as a cornerstone to reflect some of the very challenges the researcher will be facing in the collection of data to answer the set research questions.

In order to answer questions about issues with employment of people with disabilities and policies that have been effected to guide such employment, the researcher needs to collect data from different institutions and sectors regardless of beliefs about the position of and proper behaviour of females. However, as Ahmed et al. (2010) note, “Being of the same gender may allow both the interviewer and the interviewee to share their common experiences as females” (p 4). According to this statement, it is apparent that it is still quite challenging for female researchers to freely obtain data from males or institutions dominated by males. In that regard, the social distance between a female as the interviewer and a male as the interviewee will likely affect the outcome of the assessment of the employment policies for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Though the setting of the research conducted by Ahmed et al. (2010) is Bahrain (a small Arab, Muslim country), the issue of gender and culture is also a challenging issue for female researchers in Saudi Arabia. Linking the finding with the thesis statement, it is clear that Saudi Arabia’s interpretation of Islam continues to impose restrictions on the working conditions and independence of women—something that

limits the implementation of policies that are supposed to ensure fairness in the employment of female workers with disabilities.

3.2.1 Literature on disability services and policies in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is characterised by having many policies for people with disabilities; however there are few studies or little written material actually available about the people with disabilities from which they can actually benefit.

As per the available literature, there are numerous types or kinds of disability policies in Saudi Arabia. Al-Maghlooth (2000) in his study on the welfare and rehabilitation of those with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, states that the government has made a classical classification of disability organisations as per the governing agencies and has divided the same into three types or categories: firstly the organisations governed by government, secondly the organisations which are privately governed, and lastly those which are supported mainly by charitable donations. Charitable organisations and trusts can either be governed by government or privately governed.

Al-Maghlooth (2008) in his study listed the names of all such organisations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and classified them by type which was again based on the types of disability they specialised in. He also carried out an intense study to describe the services and policies which each of these organisations provided for people with disabilities. This compilation is one of the main arguments in this study that clearly indicates the urgent need for research to explore the development of organisations that cater for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia when conducting research on disability within Saudi Arabia.

Similarly to Al-Maghlooth (2008), Al-Turaki (1996) in his work 'Daleel al moaawaq

ela al Khadamat al mulaha laho bilmamlaka al Arabia al Saudi' (A disabled person's guide to the services available to him in Saudi Arabia) has also classified and categorised organisations that serve people with disabilities into three different categories according to role played. Social care and rehabilitation organisations seek to ensure an adequate living environment for people with disabilities whose families cannot not take care of them because of severe mental or physical disabilities. Al-Turaki (1996) further emphasised that these organisations are not easily accessible and hence very little information is available. People with disabilities in these organisations were isolated and sheltered from society and its general environment. Al-Turaki (1996) argued against such conditions and in favour of the belief that the disability services should work and concentrate on the inclusion rather than the exclusion of people with any disability from their general environment and society. This argument is in line with the basic premises of the social model of disability which emphasises inclusion of people with disability/disabilities in society.

The second category of such organisations was vocational rehabilitative which focused and concentrated on rehabilitation of people with disabilities who were working before they became disabled but have since have lost their jobs and are now unemployed (Al-Turaki 1996). This type of organisation continuously worked to return people with disabilities who have lost their jobs due to these disabilities to the workforce. In addition, these organisations also provided vocational training to unemployed people with disabilities so as to assist them in re-entering the workforce in a faster and easier way.

The third category of organisations as defined by Al-Turaki (1996) were completely rehabilitative and can be regarded as having a composite mix of both social and

vocational rehabilitative types of organisations. These organisations not only provided vocational training to unemployed people with disabilities but also made a continuous effort to help such people join the workforce along with providing a better living environment for people with disabilities. Al-Maghlooth (2002) observed that each of these three categories of organisations could be governed by any of the three types of governing agencies in Saudi Arabia. For example, the vocational rehabilitation organisations could be governed by governmental agencies, private institutions, or charitable trusts and organisations.

It is significant to note that both Al-Maglooth (2000) and Al-Turaki (1996), carried out research on organisations that serve people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia but the main area of focus was on the services which these organisations provided for the people with disabilities. Hence these studies did not in any sense explore the development of these organisations but however, acted as guides for people with disabilities and their families to the available services in Saudi Arabia.

3.2.2 Research on disability in Saudi Arabia

This section focuses on the nature of disability research in Saudi Arabia along with examples to provide a deeper understanding of the topic under study. The focus here is to highlight how disability has been represented in the research conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Gain and Abdulwahab (1998) in their study *“Issues and Obstacles in Disability Research in Saudi Arabia”* discussed the importance of the medical model in disability research in Saudi Arabia and the lack of research applying the social model of disability. They argued that the main factors such as employment equality, income equity and attitude in general of people in the community towards people

with disabilities has not been addressed in a comprehensive manner in disability research in Saudi Arabia (Gain & Abdulwahab, 1998). Gain and Abdulwahab further suggested that any research on disability in Saudi Arabia should consider the values and attitudes of the people with disabilities and non-disabled people regarding disability. Most of the research previously carried out on disability in Saudi Arabia was focused more on the physical aspect. These studies were concentrated and focused on the exploration of disability from a loss perspective without considering any aspect of ability.

Al-Hazmi (2000) recently conducted a disability study in Saudi Arabia "*National Research Studying Disability in Children in Saudi Arabia*" which is regarded as one of the most heavily funded pieces of research ever conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was funded by various funding agencies and involved many researchers. The basic purpose of this research was to establish a database concerning the number of children with any disability in various age groups and geographical locations of the country. The study also made an examination of the various types of disabilities and the reason behind them.

The main focus of the study was to provide the government of Saudi Arabia with detailed information about the condition of children with disabilities in the country so as to establish new services and programmes specially designed for children with disabilities in the future (Al-Hazmi, 2000). The results of the study conducted indicated that the ages and the poor health conditions of the mothers were the major reason for the birth of a child with "various mental and physical disabilities" (p.12). One of the recommendations of this research indicated the importance of increasing pregnant women's knowledge and awareness about how to give birth to

a child without any disabilities.

Another recommendation focused on establishing libraries for children with disabilities. Such libraries should further ensure that books and other educational materials should also be available in audio and visual formats to allow for easy access. The study also recommended that disability organisations should hold continuous training courses and workshops in different and varied rehabilitation areas for special educators and caregivers to improve their educational levels and provide updated information about any current issues in the field of disability. Finally, Al-Hazmi (2000) argued that scholars and academics in Saudi Arabia should look towards conducting more research in topics related to disability, including research on prevalence and characteristics of disabilities in Saudi Arabia and further research on disability policies that exist in Saudi Arabia.

Al-Hazmi's (2000) research is of great significance as it establishes a database on disability in Saudi Arabia. His study provides detailed information about the types of physical impairments and limitations of people with disability. Classification of disability was done on the basis of physical conditions whereby people with disabilities were recognised as patients. Hence this study focussed on physical aspects of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. In other words, it focused on what the people with disabilities were missing instead of what they had.

Another example of national research on disability in Saudi Arabia is published in *"The Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Public Schools: Survey Study of the Inclusion Programmes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia"* by Kashrami (2003). Kashrami (2003) found that although inclusion programmes had started a decade before as individual efforts in certain schools in Saudi Arabia to include children with

disability, there is little information available about how these programmes were implemented or how they operate in different schools across the country. The main aim of Kashrami's study was to explore inclusion programmes which benefit children with disabilities at the public schools level in Saudi Arabia and to further measure the effectiveness of such programmes. It also explored the major issues and difficulties that these programmes encountered during the implementation process. The results of the study indicated that about a decade ago there was a substantial growth in the number of schools providing inclusion programmes for children with disabilities.

Hence it is to be noted that while Al-Hazmi's (2000) study focused on exploring the prevalence of different types of disabilities that included both physical and mental disability in Saudi Arabia, Kashrami's study focused on exploring the inclusion of people with disabilities and attitudes towards them along with major issues related to the same. Such issues have rarely been explored in any research carried out on disability in Saudi Arabia. Kashrami's study focused and discussed in detail the different mental and physical disabilities of children within the same school where they received the same inclusion programme.

Nevertheless, children were classified in a systematic and careful manner as per their different mental and physical disabilities, hence medicalising the issue of disability. Much of the research carried out in Saudi Arabia about disability and concern related to the issue focuses on the healthcare and medical aspects of disability. Hence, more research is actually required to examine the real life issues which people with disabilities face in their day-to-day lives. It needs to be understood that people with disabilities, like people without disabilities, have many

other issues in their daily lives that need to be examined in addition to the medical factors of disability concerns.

There is also further need for new and extensive research to be carried out on disability in Saudi Arabia that does not categorise people with disabilities according to their physical condition. Categorising people with disabilities according to physical differences does not always add to the knowledge and information regarding the topic being researched. However, it would be more valuable and would provide a higher degree of knowledge and information to examine what is shared with the community of those with disability/disabilities instead of what is different. Hence, further research on disability in Saudi Arabia is one of the major needs of the country to ensure a better development of long term plans and programmes for ensuring more benefit to people with disabilities.

3.2.3 Western literature on disability and employment in the East

There have been a few attempts made by academics and scholars in the West to study disability and employment concerns in the Eastern context. This section of the literature review will focus on the body of literature in its relationship to the study conducted here.

Scalengh (2006) in her study *“Being Different: Intersexuality, Blindness, Deafness and Madness in Ottoman Syria”* clearly noted the absence of discussion about disability or people with disability in the history of the Middle-East. Since such discussion of people with disabilities was missing she focused on examining the various manifestations of the embodied differences in a particular Arab-Islamic context to find out the ways in which such manifestations of differences were actually enacted, discussed or interpreted and accommodated. Her basic aim was

to examine how people with disabilities and their physical differences were presented in context to the various historical texts in Ottoman Syria (A region which roughly corresponds to today's Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine) between 1500 A.D. and 1800 A.D. and to find out whether people with disabilities were included or excluded in these texts and research. Her study can be regarded as an historical context as she primarily focused on various biographical dictionaries, fatwas, chronicles, medical surveys and treatise on a wide range of other subjects.

She had a strong notion that disability in a country in the Far East should be viewed as per its own culture and religious context as disability was conceived and explained differently in different contexts. Her study was aimed towards two different goals. Firstly, the study aimed towards identification and explanation of how embodied differences were conceptualised and experienced in the early modern Arab East which was examined by concentrating on how disability was actually perceived in Eastern society and the general community.

Secondly, her aim was to provide a new insight into disability and people with disability for North American and European scholars in the field of disability-related areas. The results of her study indicated that the historical texts which were examined by her did not mention the terms "disability" or "people with disability." Moreover, she was not surprised to find that people with disabilities were categorised by their physical features and characteristics. Physical appearances and differences however did not in any context appear to affect the moral, spiritual and intellectual abilities of people with disabilities in fact the same just acted as marker of differences.

Scalengh (2006) acknowledged the importance of Islam and its religious beliefs and

practices for Ottoman Syrian Society. She further acknowledged that there is a lack of literature with regard to studies based on people with disabilities and associated employment opportunities available to people with disabilities. Extensive searching using Al-Lamki's (2007) databases for this thesis supports Scalenge's conclusion. These support one of the reasons behind this study which is the need for more intensive research that addresses the topic of disability and employment in Saudi Arabia for people with disabilities (as Saudi Arabia is a core part of the Middle Eastern region).

Rispler-Chaim (2007) is another notable Western scholar who studied disability and its effects in an Islamic context. In her book entitled "*Disability in Islamic Law*", she indicates the lack of academic literature that discusses disability in Islamic law. The aim of the research was to point out Islamic social attitudes towards disability and people with disabilities and how people with disabilities are depicted and presented in the expressions of Islamic law. She carried out intensive research into attitudes of people with various disabilities based on Muslim jurists' works in the Middle Ages and the modern era and she came to the conclusion that Islamic law lacks an ability to clearly depict and provide an insight into the basic perception of people with disabilities in the Middle East which followed the Islamic path.

In her study she further depicted the place and status which Islamic law assigned to people with disabilities and how Islamic law envisioned their participation in the various religious, social and communal life programmes conducted during that time phase. The results of her studies indicate that the attitude of Islamic law towards disability and people with disability were marked with tolerance, acceptance, accommodation and forgiveness in the context of fulfilment of religious duties or not fulfilling the same. She found that people with disabilities were allowed to

perform their religious duties and responsibilities to the extent to which their condition allowed. She also explained and provided a detailed description of how the various different ways people with disabilities could actually perform their religious duties and responsibilities towards Allah or God.

One of the main criteria discussed by Rispler-Chaim (2004) which is important in the context of this research is her findings that Islam does respect people with disabilities and their rights in society. The results of her study further indicated that people with disabilities were considered an integral part of Islamic society and were granted equal rights of participation in public services so as to ensure that people with disabilities could fulfil their religious duties like non-disabled people. An example to support this was that people with disabilities were given their rights to perform their religious duty by participating at the Holy mosque in Makkah with all other Muslims in the community.

Rispler-Chaim (2004) similar to Scalengh (2006) noted that there was no mention of the word “Disability” in any of the Islamic text which she used for conducting her research and that people with disabilities were categorised on basis of their physical characteristics and differences with no emotional attitudes such as remorse, despair, disappointment and anger associated with any such category within the legal literature context. She also expressed in her studies that the literature was sparse concerning the issues of people with disabilities or disability in general in the Islamic countries and in the Middle-East in particular. Both the above mentioned scholars argue for more intensive research to address disability issues in the Middle Eastern region of the globe.

Abu-Habib (1997) in her study focused on disability-related work by Oxfam in the

Middle Eastern region with an objective to identify the interaction between gender and disability so as to improve on the programme's planning and policy making with relation to people with disabilities and employment issues concerned with the same. The researcher's efforts discussed a reflection of the efforts of Oxfam which acts as an advocate for the change of the status of marginalised categories of people in the Middle Eastern region. The researcher found that gender does not in any sense limit access to services and employment for women with disabilities, it also stressed the importance of policies, culture, religious attitudes and traditions that sustained or increased inequality, particularly those related to women.

Abu-Habib (1997) in her study argued that people with disability are more organised than their counterparts and took a pro-active role rather than remaining a recipient of aid to focus on and discuss injustice and discrimination. The concept of Lebanese people with disabilities seeking equal opportunities as it is practiced in Lebanon provided an example for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia along with their employment concerns when they specifically started asking the government of Saudi Arabia for provision of more disability services in the country and to provide employment policies specifically directed to aid people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Though Abu-Habib (1997) was not the founder of the organisation he gave an example of the Lebanese Sitting Handicapped Association that was established in 1981 and acted as a strong advocate for people with disabilities in Lebanon. The purpose of this organisation was to focus on the need for equal opportunities, employment, promotion and unrestricted access to services available for people with disabilities along with the urgent need to promote public awareness about

issues related to disability and people with disabilities. However, Abu-Habib (1997), stressed that the perceptions of people are conditioned by one's cultural background and the changing attitude of people with disabilities in society took time to achieve. She clearly laid focus on the importance of viewing disability and its concerns which includes employment policies for people with disabilities in their own cultural domain which made it easier for the reader to understand the existing prejudices and develop plans and programmes accordingly to challenge them at a global level.

Al-Turaiki (2000) postulates from the position of Abu-Habib (1997) by acknowledging that the fact Islam is one of the most practiced religions in Lebanon. However, the study does not highlight or discuss any in depth relationship between Islam and disability and the services provided or their development plans in the Middle Eastern region of the globe. She further acknowledged that there exists a gap in terms of literature review in context to discussion on the people with disability along with women with disability and other general disability concerns in the Middle Eastern region (Abu-Habib, 1997). It is to be noted that the issue which has been focused on by Abu-Habib (1997) has also been discussed to a great extent by other scholars like Guvercin (2008) who also conducted their own studies on disability and employment policy issues among people with disabilities in the Middle Eastern region. These arguments as made by prominent scholars are in line with the main argument behind the focus of this study; that there is an urgent need of more extensive research about disability and its major issues in Saudi Arabia.

Another prominent scholar Coleridge (1999), in his study "Development, Cultural Values and Disability, like Guvercin (2008) also stressed that disability needed to be seen in its social and cultural contexts. This is of prime importance as every society

has its own cultural values and beliefs, which vary from one society to another, and it greatly impacted the ways in which people in each particular society viewed disability and people with disabilities. Coleridge (1999) took the example of Afghanistan to express his views and ideas on the issues and lessons learned from The Comprehensive Disabled Afghan's Programme (CDAP) which is a United Nations agency which focuses on helping Afghanistan, which has faced two decades of war, by providing help and support to the people with disability in Afghanistan. Although CADP is a foreign-based agency, staff was recruited locally to ensure employment opportunities for the people of Afghanistan. This ensured that staff were aware of the existing culture, traditions, policies and expectations and therefore helped in applying the development plans in a sympathetic manner. Coleridge (1999) clearly discussed how issues related to any religion and culture of any community when viewed by a foreigner might lead to the emergence of obstacles to the development programmes. For example, the word "integration" has different meanings in different cultures and societies. In Afghanistan, segregation is the norm for women and interaction with women occurs within the four walls of home whereas interaction with other outer communities and societies usually take place in a social event like weddings or funerals (Coleridge, 1999, p.158). In the same study he argued that one of the factors in Afghanistan which leads to segregation of people with disability/disabilities is their inability to marry which in a broader sense confirmed their social norm of acceptance. He further emphasised that in order to design a social development programme it is of prime importance to understand the detailed analysis of social relations and its values, the relevance and inner meaning of integration that the society practices, and the values of social integration associated with it. As per Coleridge, to develop services for people which includes

developing services and employment policies for people with disabilities an understanding of the social, cultural and religious values is of prime importance, as they form the integral part in the process of development of services for its people and society at large.

Afghanistan is predominantly occupied by Muslims and so its cultural values and beliefs are predominantly Islamic. Coleridge in his study elaborated the same by confirming that one thing which is common to all Afghans is their commitment towards their sole religion, Islam, as both a belief system and as a social programme. However, his research in Afghanistan does not establish a strong relationship between Islam and the development programmes of CADP. Hence similar to Coleridge this study also establishes and recognises the centrality of Islam in Saudi Arabia and its cultural values and beliefs which form an integral part of the community of Saudi Arabia.

Coleridge in order to identify the Islamic charitable duty of the people in this region towards Islam and their cultural values and beliefs, argued that in Afghanistan and other countries which are dominated by the Islamic religion particularly in the Middle Eastern countries, day-to-day decisions and actions are highly directed to provide the people of Islam an understanding and awareness about the afterlife. Helping deprived and poor people, which includes helping people with disabilities, is a charitable and religious duty through which the giver accrues his credit for the afterlife. Similar to the argument made by Coleridge this study also laid importance on Islamic charity and its vital role in the development of social programmes for the development of disability policies in Saudi Arabia.

Yet another renowned scholar who made an extensive study on disability in Middle

Eastern countries is Turmusani. His work provides an understanding of the existing disability services and legislation along with employment policies for people with disabilities in Jordan. A new law in Jordan was passed in 1993 which aimed to improve services for people with disabilities. He stated that the mission statement of this law focused on the rights of people with disabilities and developing appropriate services so as to ensure and promote integration in the society. This law focused on the rights of people with disabilities with regard to many factors such as education, employment, rehabilitation, accessible transportation services and other similar services in Jordan. The issues governed in the law of Jordan for the people with disabilities is similar to the ones raised by the Council of Ministers in the disability law which was framed in the context of Saudi Arabia and its people with disabilities. The disability law of Saudi Arabia also stressed its focus on developing programmes to promote education, employment and different types of associated services along with an easily accessible environment for people with disability. According to Dahlgren (2005) the established disability organisations in Jordan focused their work on providing and promoting various services for people with disabilities which included services like education, vocational training and rehabilitative services whereas many such disability organisations mainly focused on promoting employment policies for people with disabilities which is similar to the disability organisations in Saudi Arabia which along with providing related services to the people with disability in Saudi Arabia focused to larger extent on promoting employment for people with disabilities.

The government has not lagged behind in providing employment to people with disabilities in Jordan. The Ministry of Labour and the Vocational Training Co-operation were the two distinguished governmental bodies in Jordan who were

responsible for employment policies and creating equal economic opportunities for people with disabilities (Turmusani, 1999, p.5). However, Turmusani (1999) noted that the country had a significant shortage of disability centres and well-trained and knowledgeable staff to promote and support people with disabilities.

Turmusani (1999) also pointed out that the dominant model of viewing people with disability in Jordan was the medical model. In his research he mentioned that the medical model of disability largely affected the attitude of people with disabilities in Jordan. Historically, people with disability had always been looked upon as patients who need more care to ensure cure to their illness. Turmusani (1999) in his findings concluded that what is important is bringing a transformational change in this approach of what is seen as the social model of disability which lays its focus on deriving social solutions rather than focusing on individual solutions. He further suggested that in order to develop a strong social programme, service providers should concentrate more on social aspects of disability. Though the study dates back to issues that happened more than a decade ago, it is useful with respect to disability concerns in Saudi Arabia, as the medical model of disability is also seen as a prominent model of looking at disability in Saudi Arabia. Hence, similar to Turmusani's suggestion, this study also believes that the physical body is not the only framework in which to view, develop and respond to disability and its concerns in Saudi Arabia.

Algain (2002) found a dominance of Islam and its view in Jordan with more than 92% of the population identifying as Muslim. He reflected that the perception of disability as a test of faith and God's plan plays a significant role in shaping the attitude of society towards people with disability. However, his studies did not

provide a strong relationship between disability policies and services with the Islamic religion in the country of Jordan.

In summary, Abu-Habib (1997); Coleridge (1999) and Turmusani (1999) are all renowned scholars who carried out extensive research about disability services and its related provisions and services in the Eastern countries of the globe. They all gave significant importance to Islam in these countries and the manner in which the Islamic religion had an impact on the values and beliefs of people. However, their studies did not mention the effect of Islam on disability services and organisations. Dahlgren (2005) had a common viewpoint which looked towards more focused and extensive research which studied the influence of Islam and its values and beliefs in the development of disability services and disability organisations in the Eastern countries so as to come to a better conclusion of how this values and beliefs affected disability concerns and people with disabilities. Further, the same is in line with the study conducted in this thesis which focuses on disability issues and employment policies for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

3.3 Social model

A great deal of the Western literature is either based on, or influenced by, the social model of disability, that makes it difficult to apply to Saudi Arabia where discussion of the social model is very limited. The fundamental idea of the social model, that it is the environment rather than the impairment that disables, may be useful in a theoretical critique of Saudi attitudes to disability but would be difficult to apply in practical terms because the cultural and physical environment overwhelmingly influences all aspects of life, as has already been argued in this thesis. Rationalising the idea of the social model and adapting the social model to Arab and Muslim culture generally, and Saudi Arabia in particular, falls outside the scope of this

research, but would be appropriate for further research. Moreover, the idea of the social model can be adapted and transformed not only as the social model of disability but this concept would be very useful to adapt to the inclusion of women in addition to those with disability/disabilities in society by adapting the environment.

As mentioned earlier, Islamic law requires that all groups of people be allowed equal chances in life and this includes employment and access to other necessary services (Guvercin, 2008). This implies that the Muslim embraces the culture of inclusion and thereby people with disabilities are actively considered in the job market, this relates the Islamic view to the social model which encourages adapting the environment and surroundings to the needs of humans regardless of their abilities. Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) highlight that society is the main contributory factor in disabling people. This means if the environment was adapted to serve the needs of those with disabilities that would be the first step towards applying the social model in Saudi policy.

In recent years, the social model has risen to be an ideological litmus test for politics related to disability in most countries (Shakespeare, 2000). Notably, it is being used by the people with disability movement to clearly distinguish policies, ideas, laws and organisations that are beneficial from those which are not. In relation to the British disability movement, Alaikum, (2008) had earlier noted that the social model was significant as it enabled barrier removal; that is, a political strategy that is believed to promote consideration of people with disability or impairment in society. This was considered to be an appropriate strategy in transforming society's notion about disability rather than chasing a strategy of rehabilitation or medical cure. The

other part of the impact of the social model involved the people with disabilities. Under this, the author asserts that it primarily involved their transformation from blaming themselves for their place in society but instead faults society (Alaikum, 2008)). As such, the onus was on society to realise that it was up to them to change; not necessarily individuals. Shakespeare and Watson (1995) argue that as a result of this, people with disabilities became empowered and were ready to work for their equal citizenship.

It is important to note, that in the past decades, debates have continued to rage over the applicability and value of the social model (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). In response to the growing critiques, most activists assert that indeed, the social model has been misapplied and misunderstood as a social theory and its benefits have been analysed including; being considered as a big idea for the disability movement as it has been able to politically motivate social movement. According to Shakespeare (2000) the social model is easily explained and comprehended and as such, generates obvious agenda for needed social change. Simply, it assists in distinguishing friends from foes. Essentially, it reduces the common terminology “disabled individual” from a social model approach to a mainstream approach of “individuals with disabilities”. Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013) agree with Shakespeare on the definition of the social model in their research on the future of those with disability/disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Another benefit as argued by Shakespeare and Watson (2001) is related to the social model being an effective instrument in liberating people with disabilities. Through the social model, problems that are faced by individuals with disabilities are seen to be as a result of social exclusion and oppression and not because of their personal

deficiencies. As such, the moral responsibilities are theoretically placed on the shoulders of society to remove the burden imposed on people with disabilities. Other proponents of social burden view it as an effective tool in promoting self-esteem among people with disabilities. This is said to build a positive sense of collective uniqueness. In a real sense, people with disabilities are expected to feel at fault, especially when terminology such as invalid are used, reinforcing a sense of personal failure and deficit Shakespeare (1999). Notably, lack of self-confidence and esteem is a huge obstacle to people with disabilities who need to participate in society. As is the case in Saudi Arabia according to both pairs of researchers Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003), and Elsheikh and Alqurashi (2013), who were the only researchers, this seems to encourage the context of the social model of disability in their research which seems to emphasise the need more research on the social model rather than the medical model of disability.

3.4 Conclusions from the literature review

The literature review has helped in developing the research questions and also forming the basic research idea that has been classified under three sections or categories in this study. The major gaps in all previous studies related to disability issues and employment policy issues of people with disability in Saudi Arabia has been identified in the discussion and the same has been addressed in a logical manner. The following is a complete summary of the gaps which have been identified in the literature review and how the current study has addressed these gaps.

The first major issue which has been highlighted in the above discussion relates to the need for more research on issues relating to development of disability policies related to disability and people with disability in Saudi Arabia. This was because most of the research that has been carried out in the past focuses on the need for

services that the disability organisations aim to provide for people with disability in Saudi Arabia. Issues related to the development of disability policies have never been addressed. Hence in order to address this gap in the literature, the main research question in this study was formed which aimed to look towards development of disability policies in Saudi Arabia so as to ensure better services to deal with disability problems and people with disabilities.

The development of an extensive research programme is one of the urgent needs of the hour in Saudi Arabia as more research and studies are required to identify the different issues which people with disabilities face outside their physical body in their daily lives in Saudi Arabia. Hence there is a need for more extensive research that does not label people with disabilities pertaining to their body. Furthermore, in order to address this gap in the literature this study focuses on studying the development of organisations that serve individuals with disabilities, along with development of employment policies for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, which is outside the purview of any medical component or medical discourse and more related to the social model of disability specifically or social aspects in general. It is important to develop research based on real life situations that address issues related to disability and people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Finally, the aim of the study concentrates on the existing employment policies for people with disabilities along with future actions which the government of Saudi Arabia needs to look into developing more stringent employment programmes for people with disabilities which are based on real life conditions.

The research also sought to draw inferences from various studies that had been conducted in various countries that had similar characteristics to those prevalent in

Saudi Arabia. The basic aim here is to equip this study with knowledge of all major gaps which have not been addressed in previous studies (e.g. the importance of attitudes of people in general towards people with disabilities which helps in building different disability organisations along with associated services so as to enable a better life for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia). Employment policies form an important, integral part of organisations that serve people with disabilities based on which the current general environmental conditions of Saudi Arabia can be addressed and help both governmental and private bodies in developing employment policies for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Despite this, we see that that the literature review not only aims to provide an understanding of the historical context of development of research, programmes and policies related to disability in Saudi Arabia but also looks to address the literature gap existing in the previous studies to enable and provide the readers with a complete understanding of the topic in this study. There has also been research on various models of disability apart from the medical model, prominent among which is the social model of disability. Both these models focus on the society's consciousness of the value and services developed and provided by disability organisations in the context of Saudi Arabia. These models have been developed to provide a deeper understanding of the Islamic values and beliefs towards people with disabilities. Charitable organisations, for example, accept donations from governmental bodies and private sectors to provide support and development of disability services for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. People with disabilities are often supported extensively by charity and because charity might have a different perspective in Saudi Arabia than in other Western countries and their societies, it is important to review the impact of Islamic law on Saudi Arabia and

charity which has been rightly addressed in the later part of this study (see Chapter Five). Further the social model helps in looking at disability and discrimination as well as discrimination against people with disability/disabilities in society by removing environmental barriers and plays an important role in empowering people with disabilities and development of disability organisations in the country.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This section presents methodologies used in assessing the extent to which people with disabilities access employment, and examines the use of the policies from the Saudi Arabian labour law that benefit people with disability/disabilities in organisations that actually and potentially employ them. The methodological process of data collection and data analysis is also discussed in this section; in addition, the position of a female Saudi researcher carrying out this research in Saudi Arabia will be discussed. The instruments used were: pre-test data (pilot study), questionnaires, and interviews, while limited additional data were collected through observation. Also the analysis process will be explained in addition to the ethical considerations that have been made.

This chapter explains the methodology used to conduct and report the research, beginning with the theory of the methodology, which is a continuous process by which the meaning of data is extracted. The research methodology gives direction to follow to obtain answers to issues that are of concern. It is divided into the various sub-topics as methodology within this framework covers research design, the target population, the sampling strategy, data collection methods, instruments, data collection procedure, the pilot study, data processing, and analysis.

Giving introductory information on the situation of a female researcher in Saudi Arabia, and the historical socio-economic and political conditions in Saudi Arabia are elements essential for understanding a woman's position in Saudi society. The persistence of women's exclusion from public life in contemporary Saudi Arabia is the subject of one of the most heated debates not only among Muslims but also worldwide, as Saudi society comes under more and more scrutiny internationally.

The situation, however, is not as straightforward as it seems to some Western commentators and there have been developments in the role of women in Saudi Arabia. For example in 1980, there were more female graduates in the humanities than male (Hamdan, 2005). Women in university can study most of the subjects that their male counterparts can; each university has segregated buildings to avoid men and woman mixing. This paper explores some of the restraints and achievements of women researchers in Saudi Arabia today.

4.2 Research methodology

This section on the methodology will describe in depth the methods used, types of instruments, the language of the data, and the sample of the study in terms of numbers and geographical statues. Research design is defined as a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance (Kerlinger, 1964). According to Orodho (2004) research design refers to all the procedures selected by a researcher for studying a particular set of questions or hypotheses; he summarises it as a method to guide the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts. In this section we will discuss the research method and the language used, as well as the sample in terms of type, size and geographic location.

The participants of the research will be employers of people with disability/disabilities, and employees with disability/disabilities, both groups of which are important in exploring the perspectives of those whom the policy is serving and those who are supposed to apply the policy. Furthermore there are other areas which this study attempts to explore in connection with the social care of people with disability/disabilities such as the social model of disability which became an important issue in the British disability movement (Shakespeare, 2002) but which is

a new concept in the Arab world in general and in Saudi Arabia specifically.

The sample size of the study depends on factors such as the number of variables in the study, the type of research design, the method of data analysis and the size of the accessible population. Gay (2001) in Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggests that for correlation research, 30 cases or more are required; for descriptive studies, 10% of the accessible population is enough, and for experimental studies at least 30 cases are required per group. A sample size is a smaller part of the population which is carefully selected to represent all the main traits of the accessible population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). According to Gay's guidelines, 50 of the largest organisations in the western part of Saudi Arabia were used and accordingly sampling will be applied based on the result of each phase of the research.

I chose to collect the data for the sample in a particular region (Hejaz); when the Vice Minister of Labour was interviewed she had recommended the Hejaz region because (as mentioned in Chapter Two) because there were already some studies (mostly quantitative) which had targeted Nejd and Asir regions. The Hejaz region is located in the West of the country by the Red Sea; the main city is Jeddah, but it is probably better known for the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Madina. Another reason for the Hejaz region being selected was that it offered easier access for a female researcher. Historically, Hejaz has always seen itself as separate from the rest of Saudi Arabia. 35% of Saudis live in Hejaz which makes it the most populated region. Furthermore people in Hejaz have ethnically diverse origins which make them more liberal and means that females have easier access in Hejaz so that the difficulties which a female research will have to address will be less challenging.

Another reason for choosing Hejaz is as mentioned earlier is related to the

consideration that transportation and mobility for a female Saudi researcher has limitations and is virtually impossible without the support of either a male guardian or a hired driver; the use of public transportation by females is limited, and other sources of transportation such as hire car with a private driver would require a considerable amount financial support. As the researcher is living in Hejaz and was able to use the family car and driver, this reduced the costs considerably and cut down on any travel time. Since this researcher wants to study the impact of the policy in Saudi Arabia, she chose to focus her study on business organisations in different fields to examine a variety of businesses examined yet to look in depth at data from each of the targeted organisations

4.2.1 Mixed methods

In this research a mixed method approach was adopted using both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach uses different statistical tools to collect and quantify the data so that results and conclusive evidence can be found based on it; this process requires large-scale data which needs to be processed with various tests and conclusive evidence regarding the results is obtained on the basis of complex test scores conclusive evidence (Sayer, 2000); within this research, small scale data were studied. These included the number of organisations that employ people with disability/disabilities in Hejaz region, the number of employees with disabilities, and gender, age, and job position of the study subjects.

The qualitative approach on the other hand is used where quantitative approach is also considered to be feasible but looks at information that is not quantifiable (Straus & Corbin, 1998, p. 11). Qualitative data therefore includes evidence which throw light on human behaviour, and understanding and interpreting human behaviour is a complex activity because of the range of rational and irrational

behaviour demonstrated by different people (Patton, 1990). This approach therefore focuses on various aspect of human behaviours and experiences and requires the identification of the particular perspective through which better results can be identified.

The qualitative method also looks to answer various questions such as ‘why’, ‘how’, ‘when’ and ‘which’ that can help to explain the various aspect and facets of an issue in a more detailed manner (Saunders et al., 2000). This will be critical and will help to explain the ways in which the leaders face different social challenges in relation to the implementation of policies from the Labour Law in the country, recruitment procedures, adjustments made within the organisations to serve employees with disability/disabilities, as well as awareness and attitudes within organisations towards disability matters. The focus will be therefore rather on qualitative aspects rather than quantitative ones because this research studies the social aspect of the policy of the Saudi Arabian labour law by targeting the employment of people with disability/disabilities within organisations from different fields within the country.

To sum up, a quantitative approach is more often used when the research concentrates heavily on numbers, but for this study which focuses on understanding the impact culture has on employment policy, to justify and ensure proper and correct findings, the research will focus on the qualitative approach and will only use quantitative methods on a very limited scale,

For the qualitative side of the research method, a descriptive survey method is appropriate. A descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). Kerlinger (1964) states that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact

finding, but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems. Thus a descriptive survey will be used with questionnaires, interviews and observations.

The mixed method of research integrates multiple data ranges to provide answers for the research questions. According to Woolley (2009), the mixed method research approach is apposite for exploratory research where the research questions proposed may have been previously addressed. The mixed method approach improves the dependability of the findings as qualitative data is used to validate the quantitative data (Bulsara, 2012). Using the quantitative and qualitative data method also expands on the research questions. According to Cohen et al. (2007), the qualitative research approach helps in situations where the investigator is interested in exploring the beliefs and behaviours of the study population, while the quantitative research method digs deeper to explore the study environment. In this particular research, the decision to apply the two research approaches was rationalised by the need to provide a clearer picture of the answers to the research questions. In selecting the mixed research method, five benefits can be anticipated (Bulsara, 2012). These are:

Triangulation: the mixed research method facilitates the application of various types of methodology and data with the view of testing the reliability of findings.

Development: the method makes it possible to apply the results from a qualitative study in the quantitative research design.

Complementarity: the method allows the quantitative data set to confirm the validity of the research results obtained using the qualitative study.

Initiation: the method enables the findings of the qualitative study to be applied in

challenging the quantitative results.

Expansion: the method facilitates the recommendation of further research depending on the limitations of the qualitative or quantitative research approaches.

Overall, it is expected that integrating the quantitative and qualitative methods will offer reliable research findings on the employment issues inherent in hiring persons with disability/disabilities.

4.2.2 Justification for selecting mixed method approach

In spite of the extended use of qualitative research in organisational studies, the application of mixed methods in multi-modal research increases the likelihood of studies having optimal methodological effectiveness. In a typical mixed-method (MM) research, qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis techniques become integrated in one research study (Heyvaert et al., 2013).

According to Woolley (2009), the qualitative and quantitative research design components are combined to a level that their components become explicitly connected to each other in a single study. This permits them to be mutually beneficial. As a result, findings are generated that are more exact compared to those obtained using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The basic principle for the application of the mixed method approach in the present study is that neither the qualitative nor the quantitative data were expected to satisfactorily capture the variables involved in the employment of persons with disability/disabilities (Andriany & Djumahir, 2013).

Therefore the research applied the quantitative method while seeking to provide an explanation for the study environment, as well as using qualitative tools in the

process of investigating the research questions. Given that this is disability-related research which was conducted in Saudi Arabia, it was necessary to provide a broad account of critical factors such as the environment which influence the employment of the persons with disability/disabilities. To this end, it is basically the exploratory nature of the research, together with the research objective of resolving the behaviour, perceptions, and attitudes of employers of persons with disability/disabilities, which formed the basis of the decision to use qualitative tools (Wesley, 2010).

Indeed, Harris and Brown (2010) explain that the principal research techniques which have the capacity to identify and address the intricate interplay of people's attitudes within the organisation are to be found in the qualitative research approach. These qualitative techniques, for example the semi-structured interview, examine people's expectations and attitudes while they interact within the organisation. According to Harris and Brown (2010), the method helps in gaining deeper insight into the embedded organisational perceptions and further provides a vivid picture of the underlying research situation.

To this end, the interview and observation methods are specifically suited to qualitative case studies, as they provide a rich description of organisational attitudes and behaviours. Woolley (2009) points out that, by combining observation and interviews, the researcher is able to discover meanings and achieve an understanding of the research problems overall.

Indeed, by using the mixed research method, the research is provided with the capacity to draw attention to the challenges faced in implementing policies for persons with disabilities as a basis from which to reflect on some of the intrinsic

challenges the researcher faced in the process of collecting data to answer the proposed research questions. Issues with the employment of individuals with disabilities and the associated work policies that have been used to guide such employment required the researcher to collect data from different institutions and sectors (Heyvaert et al., 2013).

The study used questionnaires, observations, and interviews to survey the participants employed in the 50 large targeted organisations.

Data was collected using questionnaires that were distributed to the participants. Interviews were also conducted. The interview research instrument was applied to assess, evaluate and analyse the available resources. The researcher further applied the quantitative approach on a small scale when using questionnaires to determine the percentage of organisations that hired persons with disability/disabilities based on age, gender, type of disabilities, and the length of time in employment (Devetak et al., 2010; Davison, 2002).

Interviews and questionnaires were selected as guaranteeing the highest possible level of data quality and reliability. Interviews were also voice-recorded to permit successive precise analysis of the collected data. Questionnaires and interviews were selected as methods which would ensure that the researcher would maintain control over the data collection process without inhibiting discussion of any important aspects of employment of persons with disability/disabilities. The decision to use observation was made so as to be able to collect data by applying the available resources (Devetak et al., 2010; Davison, 2002).

The implications of the research apply to all Saudi organisations that currently operate in the country. The rationale for this is that the study seeks to study the

behaviours and attitudes of Saudi employers who hire persons with disability/disabilities, whether in public or private organisations. In doing this, it is hoped that the research results will be significantly reflective of the attitudes of employers in Saudi Arabia (Devetak et al., 2010; Davison, 2002).

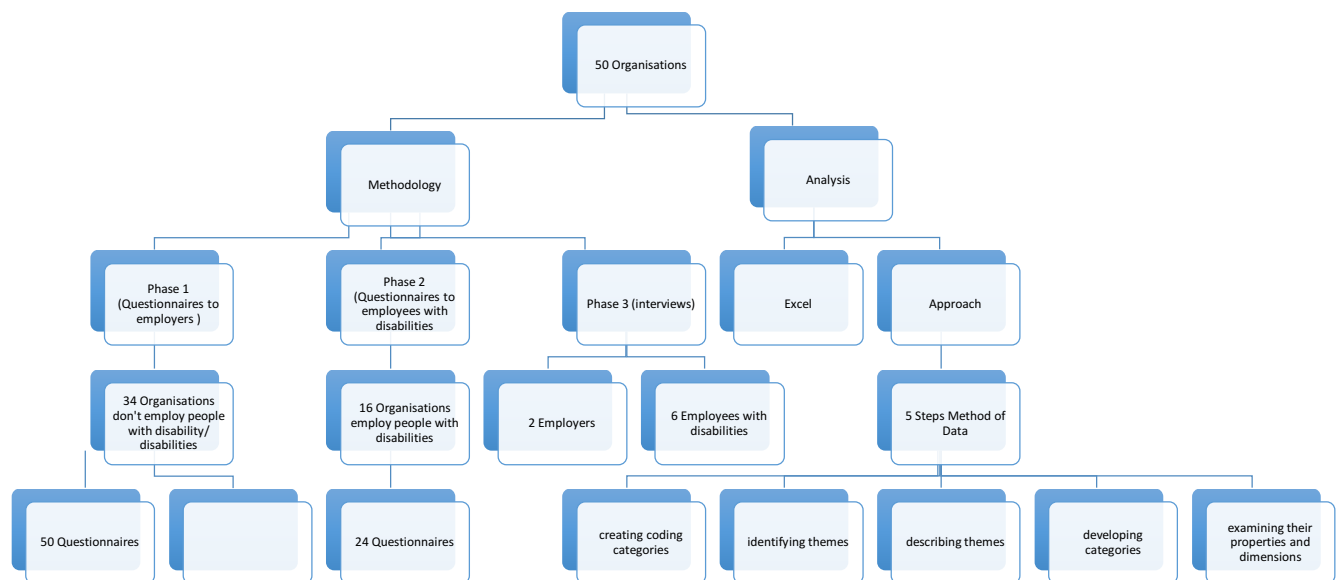


Figure 5: Map of the methodology design

4.3 The Saudi context

It is worth mentioning that during the research the instruments that have been used were either written (which was the case with the questionnaires), oral (which was

the case with the interviews), or visual (during the observational part). Knowing that adjustments to each instrument can apply, depending on the study subject, as this research is targeted to serve people who were characterised as having disability/disabilities, adjustments were made as was appropriate for the study subjects. Another major adjustment relating to the qualitative method is the impact of the societal context as adjustments in terms of applying the method, and appropriations adaptations and modifications need to be made so that the research can be carried out more successfully within a culture such as Saudi Arabia which has very unique characteristics.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, there is limited literature on the topic but I found a very similar research study to mine carried out by a woman from the University of Warwick, who carried out her research in the Middle East in Bahrain, which is also an Arab Gulf state (Ahmed, Hundt, & Blackburn, 2011). It is interesting to note that Dunya Ahmed experienced a lot of issues which are similar to mine which were also reflected in her research.

It is however worth mentioning that Bahrain is an Arab Gulf country that is more liberal than Saudi Arabia. For example woman in Bahrain are allowed to drive cars which is not the case in Saudi Arabia; in addition they have movie theatres which are not allowed in Saudi Arabia for cultural reasons. However Bahrain also has a lot of restrictions in terms of women's freedom which were mentioned in her research. One similar detail that is mentioned in Dunya Ahmed's research is the segregation of buildings by gender (Ahmed, Hundt, & Blackburn, 2011). In Saudi Arabia most facilities limit the contact between the opposite sexes as much as possible; in fact schools, restaurants, banks as well as work place segregate the sexes, either using

different buildings, or the same building divided into two with different entrances. For that reason I had to hire a male porter to help me collect the data needed from the male sectors.

It is worth mentioning that all the research instruments were in the first instance in the English language, and were then translated into Arabic as needed. Copies were available in both languages and either copy of the instrument was used depending on the participant's choice. This was necessary because the group to be studied is based in Saudi Arabia which uses Arabic as a first language, and this will guarantee that the study subjects will have the option of choosing between both languages in order for them to have a good understanding in terms of responses to the research instrument.

As in any other Arabic country, Saudi Arabia researchers face a number of limitations. For instance, body language differed in my case depending on gender. For example, shaking hands or any type of bodily contact between different genders is not common for religious reasons. However, the issue is slightly different with visually impaired people as people from different genders make physical contact with other visually impaired persons in order to guide them and this is acceptable. Green and Thorogood (2004) point out the connection between eye contact and listening in an interview. In this research, however, this was not effective when interviewing visually impaired people and so was replaced with physical contact such as touching a hand on some occasions. Although male interviewees were not touched, the researcher had to guide people with disability from both genders to the room allocated for the interview. It was also necessary for the researcher to lower the voice when talking to males, a common practice when women are talking

to men in Muslim countries. As the ethics prescribed, it was necessary to pay attention to issues of dress and to dress differently in different places. For example, in the male dominated areas the researcher had to wear a cloak ('abayaa') and go without makeup.

It has to be realised that, even as a researcher, I was very much an insider with female participants; women are usually more communicative than men which is an advantage in terms of interviews, but, knowing that I had been studying abroad and that the audience of my research is English made the interviewees try to be more neutral because they wanted to present an idealised picture. On the other hand, the interviewer was dealing with respondents whom she had met previously and this made it difficult for her to discuss certain issues with them. Particularly, she felt uneasy discussing sensitive issues and sometimes the interviewees did also. It was particularly challenging for interviewees to explain about their physical location and actual issues which might relate to their employability as they assumed that many details were already known to the interviewer and it seemed unnecessary to them to add any further information

The study adopted a number of approaches to dealing with this situation. First, participants were reassured about the confidentiality of their responses, and were told at the beginning of the interview that they should assume that the researcher did not know anything about them. Second, the researcher tried to choose an appropriate way of asking questions and kept sensitive issues until the end of the interview when participants were more relaxed. She also used prompts such as 'Tell me more' or 'Can you explain this more fully?' Sensitive topics were personal issues relating to aspirations regarding marriage, family matters, religious or political

Sunni/Shiite differences, or particular views on service providers which both the researcher and the interviewee knew. Despite this particular challenge, I was an outsider and non-disabled, yet I managed to make the interviewees feel more comfortable when I gave a brief about myself and explained that I have been working in the field of special education since 2002.

As a national I went to girls' school, which made me aware of the national etiquette. This is coupled with the fact that I am also an American citizen who studied for the first years of my education in an elementary school in the United States of America which means that I have had more exposure to different cultures. Another point to be mentioned in relation to my personal experience is that I never experienced the inclusion of students with disability/disabilities inasmuch as I graduated from high school in 2000, and the decrees applying inclusion were passed a few years before inclusion started on a limited scale. This is now increasing and, to give an example, my 15 years old sister has a few peers with disabilities who she has grown up with from elementary school.

In relation to the process of gathering data, it must be remembered that male and female employees are segregated in work environments in Saudi Arabia. To begin with, all organisations at the time of interviews had gender-segregated buildings, though meetings between the two sexes may occur in a given meeting room and that is where most of my interviews in the different organisations took place. To give further details, in relation to my Phase One (1) questionnaire, as already mentioned, I had to hire a porter to visit the 50 organisations to give the questionnaires to the line managers and HR specialists and to also help me get access to the organisations that actually hired individuals with disabilities by obtaining a note for me that would

allow me access to the building.

The other barrier was with regard to transportation. In the distribution of research data, I used my family car and driver for transport in Saudi Arabia because women are banned from driving and public transportation is limited in the country. Basically, there are a few buses with limited routes which are only used by workers and as such by men. Women either move about with family drivers or male guardians; we do have taxis but it is not socially acceptable for Saudi women to use taxis although sometimes nurses from the Philippines or foreign ladies use them.

I am married and I live with my husband who is also my guardian; he works from 8 am until 6 pm on working days, and all my interviews are scheduled which to take place during this time period which made it impossible for him to drive me to meetings. It is for this reason that I borrowed my parent's driver.

There are certain communication barriers between the sexes, and communications with men take place in a specific manner in Saudi Arabia. For instance, men and women are not allowed to shake hands because physical contact is prohibited for religious/cultural reasons. In addition, women should address men 'brother' and men should address woman as 'sister' as is normal practice in Muslim culture.

4.4 Research instruments

The term 'research instruments' refers to the tools a researcher chooses to use to collect data. It is related not only to instrument design, selection, construction, and assessment, but also to the conditions under which the designated instruments are administered. In this research the instruments that were used for data collection were questionnaires and interviews and limited observation. Each was essential for answering the research question from the perspective of both employers and

employees with disability/disabilities.

4.4.1 Questionnaire

According to Nkapa (1999) a questionnaire is a carefully designed instrument for collecting data in accordance with the specifications of the research questions.

The data collection method primarily uses research questionnaires which basically have survey-style question-and-answer formats. The research questionnaire was designed using several key questions that were grouped thematically. The rationale for the use of questionnaires was the large number of items and high number of likely possible responses that the study expected. According to Ellis and Levy (2008), a questionnaire consists of a sequence or series of questions developed to draw out data from respondents during the process of completing self-administered questionnaires or in reply to an interviewer's questions. The researcher will use questionnaires as the primary data collection method. The questionnaires contain several check questions designed to validate the objectivity of the participants (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

Runeson and Host (2009) also state that questionnaires comprise managed verbal exchanges that are significantly contingent on the effectiveness of the investigator's communication skills. In the current study, this assumes the researcher's capacity to establish connection or rapport with the respondents. As proposed by Denzin and Lincoln, (2000), the researcher will also draw attention to relational elements.

The choice of the questionnaire method was based on the significance of the organisational context in the study as it was expected that respondents would provide information on their perceptions of the organisations' management of the employment of persons with disability/disabilities and the extent to which they have

adapted their policies in relation to employing the persons with disability/disabilities (Creswell et al., 2004). The questionnaire method fits the purpose of the current study as:

It provides the researcher with a greater capacity to generate rich organisational data;

The language used by the participant in their comments in the questionnaire was significant in gaining an understanding of the attitudes of employers in relation to employing persons with disability/disabilities and their organisations' policies;

The data generated will be highly flexibly, making it easy for analysis using data sheets and SPSS;

The contextual and relational aspects are crucial for obtaining deeper insight into employment of persons with disability/disabilities and policies in this respect (Creswell et al. 2004).

4.4.1.1 Data collection using questionnaires

Questionnaires were preferred due to their suitability for this type of study. Each item in the questionnaire was developed to address a specific objective, research question, or aim of the study such as the policy in the Labour Law, the recruitment procedure, adjustments, awareness levels, and attitudes.

The questionnaires consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions provided data that is easy to compute and analyse, while the open-ended questions permit a greater depth of response, thus adding quality to the data collected. For this study, there were two types of questionnaires used; each addressed a different category of individuals, first, employers of organisations (see

Appendix 1), and secondly employees with disability/disabilities (see Appendix 2).

As seen in the appendix, each set of questions addresses a different category in the questionnaire study in order to explore different perspectives.

As mentioned previously, each of the questionnaires has two versions, Arabic and English, depending on the choice of the participants; this decision was made because as an Arabic speaker I was able to allow the participants to reflect their opinions and thoughts freely and not be limited because of worrying about the spelling or the correct meaning of the word in their second language, English; however a copy of the questionnaire in English was available for those who preferred it.

The questionnaires were given out in paper form and not as electronic copies because the researcher was worried that the participants would not reply via email in the scheduled time frame; the research had three different phases and each phase depended on the results from the previous one.

The first set of questionnaire were distributed during Phase One (questionnaires to employers) and were given out to 50 employers from different organisations. This phase included Question 13: 'In your view, that is using your own understanding of 'disability', are there currently any employees with disability/disabilities in your workplace?' The number of 'yes' replies to that question developed the sample of Phase Two (2) when the second set of questionnaire was distributed to employees with disability/disabilities.

It is important to note that the second set of questionnaires was also paper-based but the form was adjustable depending on the type of disability the participant had; for example if the disability was visual, either a braille copy or an auditory assistant was provided.

4.4.2 Pilot study

When carrying out a pilot study, the aim is usually to establish the likely behaviour of respondents in the field when the exercise commences. In this manner, a pilot study can be used to attain a rough picture of the behaviours respondents are likely to manifest, especially in responding to the questions (Hall, 2008). At the same time, a pilot study is used to measure the level to which the respondents are able to understand the questions. Different respondents are likely to view and understand similar questions in different ways. Therefore, the pilot study provides the opportunity to establish problems or challenges which respondents may have in reading and answering the questions (McBurney & White, 2009). This makes it possible to modify the wording so as to make it easier for the respondents.

Furthermore, a pilot study provides the chance for a researcher to evaluate the efficacy of the adopted research instruments and whether or not they are going to provide useful data for the study in a given period of time (Anderson, 1998). As a result, it becomes possible to modify the instruments when the results of a pilot study show that they cannot be relied upon or implementing them in the field is a complex matter. In most cases the main aim of the pilot study is to establish the viability of the study: whether or not it is possible to carry out the study within the adopted research methodology (Offredy & Vickers, 2010). Where the pilot study reveals this to be impossible, then it becomes necessary to make appropriate changes to the questionnaires.

The pilot study was carried out with two types of questionnaires, one for the employer and the other for the employee. Two participants took part in the pilot study, both coming from the same organisation. The researcher purposely selected the categories of the respondents, where in this case, one was supposed to be a HR

specialist from the company or any other line manager, and the other was supposed to be an employee with disability. Respondents were supposed to answer 25 questions in total. The questions were semi-structured in nature.

The researcher booked an appointment with the organisation and the aims and goals of the study were explained to the organisation's CEO's in a telephone conversation. Furthermore, after the organisation's CEO had agreed to participate in the research and to give the researcher an appointment so that she could visit the organisation and interview the employees, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents in the period of a day.

The observation drawn from the pilot study is that respondents were able to address the questions quite well. Also, only one question (22) that was addressed to the employer of individuals with disabilities was not comprehended by the study subject. This was due to the inability of the respondent to understand the question. Therefore, it was proposed that the question be modified and be formulated in simple and understandable language. This required the wording of the question to be modified. Overall, other questions invited no particular difficulty and hence remain unchanged.

4.4.3 Interview

The qualitative research interview is intended to provide a description and meanings for the main themes in the lives of the participants. The central task entails recording what the participants say. The interview method covers the factual and the meaningful levels (Phellas et al., 2011). Specifically, interviews are appropriate in finding out the story behind the experiences of a participant. Using this method, the researcher sought to obtain in-depth information on employment and policy

issues in relation to persons with disability/disabilities (Jorgensen, 2004). The research interviewed employers and employees with disability/disabilities,

According to the work of Koul (1984), an interview schedule is a device consisting of a set of questions that are to be asked and voice recorded by an interviewer face-to-face with the interviewee. An interview schedule can be used detailing an open general question followed by a few specific questions in case not all topics were discussed within the open question. As observed by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) the interview schedule makes it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of a study. This instrument can be designed to address the issues that form the basis of this study, seeking information concerning the views of employers and employees with disability in terms of the employment situation of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

As mentioned earlier Saudi Arabia has a unique culture; it is an easier task for a female researcher to interview women. This research was, however, not gender-based, and the researcher needed to interview as many employees of both sexes with disability/disabilities as she could, as well as access figures that relate to the employment of people with disability/disabilities, regardless of gender.

Six interviews were carried out; in total, three of the interviews that took place included female participants and 3 were with male interviewees. The interview with one of the female interviews had some close similarities to those carried out by Janet Finch (1984), a feminist sociologist. She opened up the world of gender-based research and in particular in relation to interviewing women. She conducted research on clergy wives and mothers involved in playgroups to find out more about marriage, motherhood, and childbearing. Being a clergy wife herself and being able

to interact with the women involved in playgroups enabled her to conduct her research better than she had ever expected. It was a similar situation when I interviewed the advisor to the Minister of Labour. We were both female researchers in the field of disability and this made the interaction between us more relaxed; we were both insiders when it came to the field of disability, in addition the advisor had been my mentor during my BA studies.

There are similarities between the three basic approaches which Finch (1984) employed and mine. In addition to the use of in-depth interview I applied some during my interview with the advisor to the Minister of Labour in Saudi Arabia. First, the setting was informal; furthermore the advisor is used to answering questions from various sectors of society, from educators, business organisations, and with social workers who deal with people with disability/disabilities issues and their social care in their daily lives in relation to education and work arrangements, as well as their social care in general. As explained previously, women are more at ease and chat more freely with other woman compared to men; furthermore, because of the previous relationship with the advisor of the minister, the interview was informal and took place in her office during her break time.

We started by catching up and having coffee together. Secondly, the setting in the interviewee's private office made the conversation an intimate affair since it had been a long since we had last met. I called on her to ask if I could interview her and see her to catch up. Thirdly, her position as the advisor to the Minister of Labour along with her previous background which was in the field of the education of people with disability/disabilities which was the area in which she has a PhD, made it particularly likely that she will accept the opportunity to talk to a sympathetic

listener. All these factors coupled with our previous relationship allowed me get the information needed from the interview as an insider, both of us being females working in the field of disability.

The other 2 female interviewees were employees with disability/disabilities. Being of the same gender made it easier because the social norm in Saudi Arabia is gender segregation. However, as mentioned previously, women talk freely to each other, and furthermore are more communicative than men. Although the interviews was arranged formally, being of the same gender allowed these female interviewees to feel at ease sharing their common experience with the interviewer, for example they would use the expressions such as “as we women know “, and “us women “. In addition, we shared the same problems with transportation where it can be problematic for a female to get to and from work. However it was not necessarily the case that having the same sex would allow these women to speak freely with the interviewer knowing that the interviewer is not characterised as having a disability, but the interviewer tried to resolve this issue by getting the interviewees to feel at ease by describing herself and her field of study to help these female interviewees to understand that her research topic is to study the policies that exist and how well they serve them.

The other two interviews were with males, one of them was with the head of the Ebsar Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired, an organisation specifically serving individuals with visual impairment, and the other 2 were with employees with disability/disabilities one of whom had a visual disability and the other a physical disability. The interviewer took into consideration the cultural barriers of gender; she was dressed in an “abayaa” which is the black cape woman

wear in Saudi Arabia, she addressed the men as ‘brother’ which is the proper way to address men in Saudi culture, she further took into consideration details such as avoiding physical contact, limiting eye contact, as well as keeping her voice low in respect of the cultural norm in Saudi Arabia (Ahmed, 2010).

4.4.4 Limited observations

It is appropriate to use participant observation to examine processes, relationships between individuals and events, the organisation of events and people, along with the continuities over time, and patterns, in addition to the immediate socio-cultural contexts where phenomena relating to human existence unfold. Since the study seeks to examine circumstances surrounding the employment of persons with disability/disabilities and how employers comply with the associated policies, participant observation is an appropriate method for the study (Fox, 1998).

According to the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia (2002), observation is the systematic description of behaviours, events, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for a given study. In this case observation will enable the researcher to describe existing situations using seeing, hearing and feeling. Participant observation is the process that enables the researcher to learn about the built environment of the workplace where people with disabilities work and their activities in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. In so doing, the study learns through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting.

The feeling and hearing part of the observation was conceptualised during the time when I was leaving after I had interviewed a female participant with a visual disability. I saw most of the women from the organisation standing outside the door

waiting to be picked up by their drivers, including the girl I had interviewed. As her driver arrived he called her then directed her to the car by phone because he is not allowed to get out of the car and guide her using physical contact.

As for the seeing part of observation, it is essential to note that from my observation, I found that most of the organisations that hire individuals with disability actually have good assistive aides within the building or work place; it was unfortunate is that the outside built environment such as the parking lots and the actual access to the buildings present difficulties. Here I barely saw any ramps and it was clear that there were not enough parking spaces for persons with disabilities, and, when these were available, they were not close to the buildings.

4.5 Data collection

In this section the researcher will explain the process of gathering and quantifying information on employment and disability in Saudi Arabia, in an established systematic fashion that enables the stated research questions to be answered. In order to choose the right business organisations to approach, the data collection started with an interview with the advisor of the Ministry of Labour in Saudi Arabia; during this interview she guided the researcher to 50 large organisations in Saudi Arabia from different fields in the western part of the country (Hejaz). The data gathering process was then divided into 3 phases:

4.5.1 Phase One (1):

In Phase One (1), 50 questionnaires were distributed to human resources or A line managers from the 50 organisations. The norm for collecting data over a short period of time in Saudi Arabia would not be emailing the participants questionnaires because people do not necessarily respond to email questionnaires; there is no actual research which proves this, but Arabic society is very much an oral culture

which means oral communication is more highly valued by the audience (Ayish, 2003). The researcher wanted to guarantee that she would receive 50 responses, one from each organisation; however access to the organisations for a female researcher was not easy because most of the employers targeted were in the male section of the organisations. This was not because the researcher wanted to limit her participants to only one gender, but the managers of the 50 organisations were most likely to be males, so in order to reach this group, the researcher hired a male porter to distribute and collect in the questionnaires for Phase One (1). She also arranged to stay in contact with the porter by phone to facilitate the process in case participants needed answers to any inquiries regarding the questionnaires; this phase of the data collection took 5 weeks.

The questionnaires to the employers and employees with disabilities covered the following issues:

The percentage of organisations that actually hired individuals with disabilities

Reasons for hiring people with disabilities (Graffam et al., 2002), disability categories for the people with disability/disabilities employed in each organisation (such as developmental, physical and others)

Legal frameworks employed in regard to people with disability (such as disability policies, standards, strategies, and absence management (Al-Turaiki, 2000)

Training support offered to them (such as job coaching); employers' best practice in each company (such as the capacity and the willingness to employ people with disabilities)

Access to employment (job finding or retention support, counselling and career

guidance support (Satcher, 1992); existing consultancy services to people with disabilities (Rosenberg & Brady 2002)).

In addition, the questionnaires will cover the employers' perceptions regarding job-related needs (safety needs and mobility needs (Alexander & Morgan, 2005)), measures taken by employer to meet such needs, the challenges encountered in employing people with disabilities, and suggestions for promotion of employment of people with disabilities.

The responses to the questionnaires distributed in Phase One (1) revealed 16 organisations that have hired employees with disabilities.

4.5.2 Phase Two (2):

The questionnaires distributed in Phase Two (2) were addressed to employees with disability/disabilities within these 16 organisations. The questionnaires to the employees covered topics such as how people with disabilities were employed, whether they experienced any difficulties at work, if any adjustments had been made to make their job easier, if they had received any specific training, if the environment and the infrastructure was conducive, and if there were any recommendations which the interviewees would give to make things easier for people with disabilities. The researcher at this stage had already arranged access to each of the 16 organisations and distributed and collected the Phase Two (2) questionnaire to employees with disabilities in person, Another difficulty regarding the delivery of research materials which made it necessary to hire a male porter in Phase One (1) is that I usually have to use my family driver for transport in Saudi Arabia because woman in Saudi Arabia are banned from driving. For this reason I used my family's driver who is Indonesian to take me to the organisations where I

collected the data for the second and third phase of my studies (through questionnaires to the employees and interviews), because he knew how to get to most of the places which saves time for me, and in addition can accompany me since some of the organisations are located in very industrial areas which are not easy for women to access and where it is rare to see females. Additionally, as a woman I cannot be in a room alone with a male interviewee without a third party so, when the organisation had not arrange for a third party to be present, the driver could accompany me with the consent of the person I was interviewing.

This phase resulted in 24 questionnaires gathered from employees with disabilities, and was completed in 3 weeks.

4.5.3 Phase Three (3):

Phase Three (3) was based on the results of the last question of the questionnaires for employees with disability/disabilities, which was, 'are you willing to be interviewed?' Six out of twenty-four respondents who had filled out the questionnaire agreed to be interviewed, and the researcher arranged interviews based on their convenience and work schedules. In addition to the 6 employees with disabilities who were interviewed, the researcher also interviewed the head of the Ebsar Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired, an organisation serving individuals with visual disabilities.

The researcher included an interview in this phase so that personal insights could be collected and more detailed information obtained than had been from the questionnaire. This helped to provide more conclusive evidence and details relevant to the research which would throw light on the manner in which different decisions were made; this phase of the data collection took two weeks. The overall framework

further looked at ensuring that the different dimensions examined helped in the analysis of the different scenarios through which business dynamics were able to provide maximum effectiveness. The research process thereby helped to ensure that the overall potential of the business was developed and ensures that the research provides conclusive evidence regarding the different services which are provided, and the impact disability has on the employment rate.

During the data collection the decision was taken to collect the data in Arabic although this required more time and effort on part of the researchers; this decision was made taking into consideration the language and the culture of the people under study, however the findings were to be presented in English. The researcher choose to do the translation in person in order that both the meaning and the cultural content of the data would not to be lost in translation. These decisions had a direct impact on the quality of the findings of the research and the resulting reports.

4.6 Analysis

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data; since the data of this research was mainly qualitative with some quantitative data, only limited statistical and logical techniques were needed to describe and evaluate the data. In addition the process of analysis was also spread through three phases as the data collection was carried out over three different phases; each phase was analysed separately and coupled with an extended review of all the published literature on the subject which was not a straightforward task. After consulting with several academics in Jeddah and my supervisors, I was comfortable with my intended approach. All transcripts were studied carefully to highlight the areas crucial for the analysis. Sensitive and ethical grouping of views on all-important points were recorded and I re-evaluated the validity and accuracy of my findings.

Before starting to analyse the data, it needed to be translated from Arabic to English; the researcher decided to do that in person in order for her not to lose the content of the data, as well as because of ethical considerations regarding the confidentiality agreement with the participants.

To analyse data of this nature (in all three phases), I used the *5-step method of data analysis* developed by McCracken for long interviews (McCracken, 1988); this method was used for both interviews and questionnaires. The data in this context was analysed by creating coding categories, identifying and describing themes, and developing categories by examining their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first step in the *5-step method of data analysis* involved reading the transcripts generated from respondents carefully, making notations in the margins. A computer software programme was used to analyse the data, where data was only entered into the software database after copies of printed transcripts had been read (Weitzman & Miles, 1995). The second step involved observing and developing data into preliminary descriptive and interpretive categories based on evidence presented in the transcripts. The third step is where thorough examination of preliminary codes was carried out to identify connections and develop patterns of codes. The fourth step involved determining basic themes by examining clusters of comments made by respondents and memos made by researchers (McCracken, 1988). The last step involved examining themes to delineate predominant themes contained in the data.

The initial grouping of themes was as follow: information about participants and organisations, information about policy, information about recruitment, information about adjustments, and finally awareness.

Analysis were then completed and double-checked with the list of initial grouping as a method of verification (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Based on guidelines provided by scholars such as Al-Quraini (2007) the study in the analysis will adopt a mixed-method approach, placing the quantitative and qualitative data analysis in separate chapters, thus providing a clear and chronological account of the data obtained and creating a link that will be easy to understand. In the analysis process, the sample will be divided into groups. The analysis will begin by presenting an evaluation of the reliability and validity of the study to give clarity to the data presented and hence the discussion and any deductions made. After that, the equivalence of the three phases will be explained in detail in the findings chapter and, finally, the data will be described. Data analysis starts with calculation of the mean scores and culminates with answering the research questions. In terms of the analysis of the quantitative data, a spreadsheet will be used to come up with results in a statistical manner.

4.7 Ethics

Approval and permission of the University Ethics Committee were sought and granted before any of the fieldwork process started and their guidelines were followed throughout the research process. A climate of respect for human dignity and the right to privacy was guarded closely and the researcher made every participant aware of his or her right to privacy as well as ensuring that the data was protected at all times. Furthermore, whenever questions broached an issue of cultural sensitivity, the researcher reminded interviewees of their rights and her ethical obligation towards them. While recruiting participants, the researcher took the time to explain the purpose of the interview and informed each participant of his/her right to withdraw at any time.

In the case of a group discussion with some job market fair rejects, the researcher informed them, after a long discussion, of her background and the reasons for the research. They were enthusiastic and decided to consent, provided their identities were not revealed. To further ensure confidentiality and accuracy, the researcher herself translated all the transcripts since these were recorded in Arabic, because this is the researcher's and participants' first language, and this would make communications easier.

The consent form has been further attached in the appendix. The international guidelines on research require that all research process be subjected to ethical standards to promote respect for every human being and to protect their rights and well-being. In addition, it is stressed that, if some of the research participants are vulnerable, they require protection. Every research participant should be informed adequately of the research methods, aim, source of funding, and possible risks in the process. In addition, the participant should be made aware of their right to refrain from participation or to withdraw from the process without reprisal. In addition, vulnerable persons should be exempt from participation unless it is necessary.

The principles in the declaration were based on generally accepted ethical standards of justice, beneficence, and respect for persons. According to teachings on Islamic relations in the Holy Quran, these principles are in agreement with the rules of Islam. For instance, one basic concept of Islamic law is to protect people from harm, and it forbids actions that promote harm and have no benefit for people (Fadel, 2010). These standards characterise the Islamic view of research.

4.8 Study limitations

Research on the employment of persons with disability/disabilities in UAE remains a virtually virgin area. Such a perceived paucity of research literature is likely to affect the depth of documents which can be reviewed in the data collection process. An additional critical limitation is that, since the study concentrates on Saudi Arabia, the generalisability of the findings may be limited in relation to organisations outside the country. The sample population was also small hence further limiting the research's generalisability.

4.9 Consent agreement

The researcher based the study wholly on the participant's free and voluntary informed consent. The researcher explained to the respondents their right to decline to participate or to withdraw from the study. Additionally, the researcher communicated to the participants the extent to which confidentiality would be maintained and that they would be informed regarding the potential application of the collected data, in addition to their freedom to renegotiate or reconsider their consent.

The researcher also requested the participants' consent to record data during the data collection process, since this was considered the most straightforward method of enabling data to be stored in a comparatively unproblematic way.

4.10 Conclusion

This section explains the processes used to evaluate and the methods used to access data on the employment of people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, from the point of view of both the employer and the employee, and the application of policy from the Saudi Arabian Labour Law that benefit people with disability/disabilities in organisations that actually and may potentially employ them. The methodological

process of data collection and data analysis was also discussed in this section. In addition the position of the female Saudi researcher carrying out this research in Saudi Arabia was discussed and how this influences the research process. Furthermore ethical issues were explained which must be taken into consideration due to the special characteristics of Saudi society.

Chapter Five: Findings

5.1 Introduction

This section critically reviews the findings from the research. For reasons alluded to in previous chapters, the Saudi government needed a rapid and effective solution to the problem of high structural unemployment among people with disability/disabilities. The rationale of the Saudi government and its policy makers is clear. Developing policies for the employment of people with disability/disabilities is desirable because there are more jobs that could currently be occupied by people with disability/disabilities in the Saudi workforce and these jobs could theoretically be made available for unemployed Saudi nationals who are characterised as having disability/disabilities. This is the premise of this section as it critically assesses findings based on the theoretical models and data presented above. This rationale is justified by reference to the success of similar programmes in the Gulf area for example in Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

As mentioned in the previous chapter the data was collected in three phases: Phase One (1) was a questionnaire distributed to employers in organisations in different fields, Phase Two (2) was a questionnaire for employees with disability/disabilities, and Phase Three (3) was interviews with employers and employees with disability/disabilities. Initially a total of 50 employers coming from 50 different organisations in different fields were approached to give data based on the research instrument. It was then realised that only 16 organisations hired persons with disability/disabilities. Next 24 employees with disability/disabilities were giving questionnaire; 6 out of the 24 then agreed to be interviewed, and 2 employers were also interviewed. Each phase was analysed separately as follows:

5.2 Results from Phase One (1) (employers within 50 organisations)

This section of the study focuses on experiences of employers and potential employers of people with disability/disabilities (potential employers are those who are willing to employ people with disability/disabilities but currently have no employees with disability/disabilities). The section of the study mainly targeted human resource managers or a line managers with responsibility for five or more staff members in an organisation.

Of the 50 respondents, 29 were human resource managers, 16 were line managers with responsibility for 5 five or more managers, and two respondents were neither HR managers nor line managers. In terms of ownership, 44 of the organisations involved were private while six were public organisations owned by the government, ten organisations employed less than 15 people, 15 organisations employed 15 to 100 workers and 24 organisations employed more than 100 employees. Two of the three government organisations employed more than 100 people while the remaining one employed between 15 and 100 people. The majority of the private organisations that participated in the study employed more than 100 people. In terms of the main business sectors, six were mining and quarrying organisations, two were manufacturing firms, six of the firms were wholesalers or retailers, while two of the firms dealt in electricity, gas or water supplies. Generally, most of the organisations were manufacturing firms, whilst a few belonged to the service industry. All government organisations were in the manufacturing sector.

Policies on disability seem to not be taken seriously, with only twelve organisations admitting to having a formal policy regarding the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. The remaining organisations (34) did not have any formal policy regarding the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities while

four firms failed to answer this question. Only one of the three government organisations did not have any policy regarding the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. The results show that four organisations that had agreed to have policies regarding disabilities had these policies written down, whilst seven of them did not have any written policies and two of the correspondents were not aware of any. The majority of these firms with disability policies formally monitored these policies.

Recruitment, training and development, promotion, sickness or absence management, and redundancy or terminations are the dominant policies in most of the organisations. However, monitoring practices targeting employees with disability/disabilities, equipment/personal support for employees with disability/disabilities, adapting working hours as necessary, adapting the working environment, and consulting with employees with disabilities on their needs also featured in many firms' formal policies in relation to employees with disabilities. Five of the human resource managers were fully aware of the opinions of the employees of their organisations on the employment of people with disabilities; eight of the managers were partially aware of them, whereas only one manager was not aware of the opinions of the employees of the organisation on the employment of people with disabilities.

Attitude is an important factor when talking about disability employment in organisations. From the results, 13 of the 50 managers indicated that the organisation they work at actively encourage job applications from people with disability/disabilities. On the other hand, 18 organisations had no particular view or policy for or against recruiting people with disabilities, while 4 four organisations

did not consider employing persons with disability/disabilities. Other organisations considered other factors such as community service, and gave employment priority to people with disability/disabilities in area that are appropriate for their condition, and taking the current economic situation into consideration.

It is interesting to note that most of the organisations that did not consider employing people with disabilities did not actually have any policies on disabilities. Most of the organisations preferred to contact job centres and employment agencies who could recommend candidates with disability/disabilities during recruitment drives. At the time the questionnaires were completed, 16 of the 50 organisations employed people with disabilities, while 34 did not. It is interesting to note that one organisation with disability policies did not have any employees with disabilities while four organisations with no disability policy actually had people with disability/disabilities currently employed. Generally, organisations with disability policies employed people with disability/disabilities, while those without disability policies did not employ any people with disability/disabilities.

The highest number of employees with disability/disabilities in a single organisation was 250 and the least number of employees with disability/disabilities was one. The total number of employees with disability/disabilities according to the study who were actually employed were 367 within the 16 organisation that have employees with disabilities. All of the people employed with disability/disabilities were characterised as having physical disability/disabilities as opposed to mental disability/disabilities, of which there were none. Nine were paralysed, or deaf or with a hearing impairment.

The results show that most people with disability/disabilities employed were

between the ages of 25 and 34 years old (10), 6 employees were between the ages of 18 and 24, and 7 employees were between 35 and 44, with only 2 between 45 and 54. There were no employees with disability/disabilities aged 55 years and above in any organisation. Most of the employees with disability/disabilities were engaged in professional and skilled service occupations. Few were in management and administrative positions, while some were involved in routine and unskilled operations.

Nine of the organisations that employ people with disabilities do the following for their employees: provide special equipment, modify their workplace, provide flexible working patterns, and alter jobs to suit employees with disabilities. Most of the organisations did not have in place job sharing because they employed very competent but physically challenged individuals. Four of the organisations provided training, counselling and additional incentives on the job. 11 of the human resource managers admitted that it was easy to make changes in favour of people with disability/disabilities in the organisations.

Two of the managers stated that they were facing challenges in implementing these changes. It has been claimed that the implementation of disability policies comes with a cost; four managers agreed with this statement, though they were not willing to quantify the cost. However, it is interesting to note that five managers regard the cost of any adjustment as part of a normal organisation's costs. Two managers stated that their organisations were not experiencing additional costs as a result of adjustments made in relation to the employment of people with disability/disabilities.

Most of the organisations with no disability policies did not employ people with

disabilities. 16 managers stated that they did not employ people with disabilities because no-one with a disability had applied for employment in the organisation. However, six of the managers agreed that some have applied but had not been recruited on grounds other than their disability. 15 managers agreed that making adjustments for an employee who becomes disabled often costs less than recruiting a new employee. At the same time, most of these same managers disagreed with the statement that an employee with disabilities creates an additional workload for HR staff management and needs more supervisory time.

When asked about the recommendation from the government, society, and organisations to promote the employment of people with disabilities, 29 people responded and 21 did not. Out of the 29 responses 12 agreed that people with disabilities should be provided with proper training in order for them to join the work force. One of the responses was:

I believe that the government should handle the promotion of the employment of people with disabilities by providing proper training programmes according to the market demands, because this group are all being trained in tasks unrelated to the actual market demand.

8 eight of the responses emphasises that all organisations should be forced to hire people with disability/disabilities. One of the responses was:

All organisations must be forced to have a certain percentage of their employees who have disabilities.

6 of the responses stated that, in order to promote employment of individuals with disabilities, awareness must be spread throughout the business environment of the potential of this sector of the community. Only 3 responses thought the built

environment plays a role in the promotion of the employment of individuals with disabilities. One of these stated:

Promoting a suitable environment that meets the needs of people with disabilities will make them feel enabled to work.

Another respondent said:

Each HR section of an organisation should arrange for special services upon the request of each individual with disability/disabilities; this can be a parking space or an elevator or just a simple ramp at the entrance of the building.

When asked about any advantages to employing people with disability/disabilities in the work place, 36 people responded, while 14 did not. 14 of the people who responded agree that this is a social responsibility to the community. One of the responses was:

This is a person who is a part of the community and it is only fair to include him in the work force and help him to support himself.

7 of the responses said that one advantage was in relation to the policy of Saudisation and Nitaqat Sachem:

According to the Ministry of Labour each employee with a disability will be considered equivalent to 5 Saudi non-disabled employees, to help apply the Saudisation strategy; there must be other advantages but we haven't experienced them yet because of our lack of experience in dealing with individuals with disabilities.

There were 7 employers who believe in the potential of employees with

disability/disabilities, according to one of the respondents:

From my experience in working with peers with disability/disabilities, they have high capabilities, and ideal competence in their area of strength and carry out the job in the best way possible.

6 of the employers saw no advantages in employing people with disability/disabilities, and 1 respondent says that the advantage is that it is what the Islamic faith expects which is to treat all people as equals, with one employer responding:

We cannot hire many employees who have disabilities because our work environment doesn't support those kind of people; most our employees are drivers or security guards.

When asked whether any adjustments are made in an organisation that displays good practice, 19 responded, 6 of whom had made environmental changes, 4 had made adjustments to the job positions of employees with disabilities, 1 had decreased the working hours and provided transportation, and 8 respondents said that no adjustments had been made.

When asked about the challenges a person with a disability faces in the recruitment process of the organisation, only 8 out of 50 responded. 6 said there were no challenges, and 2 said that proving their abilities could be a challenge. 1 was concerned about the issue of adaptations in the work environment, and received the following responses:

Most of our tasks require meeting clients; that's why we don't hire individuals with disabilities.

The nature of the work in our organisation doesn't meet the needs of those

with disabilities.

We cannot employ them because of the work environment and the possibilities of accidents taking into consideration that not all disabilities face the same challenges. We want to make them feel equal to others and I believe they have this right.

Most of the tasks require movement which makes it difficult to employ people who have physical disability/disabilities, and as for the blind and deaf, we don't have the right equipment

5.3 Results from Phase Two (2) (employees with disabilities)

This section of the study focuses on the experience of employees with disability/disabilities and targeted people who are employed with disability/disabilities in the 16 organisations that have employees with disability/disabilities according to the results from Phase One (1). In Phase Two (2) 20 of the 24 employees given the questionnaire were in the private sector while four were employed in the public sector that is by the government.

12 were characterised as having physical disabilities; three of these specified their physical disability, with two being hemiplegic and one quadriplegic. Six of the people interviewed were characterised as being visually impairment, and four as deaf or hard of hearing. Two of the respondent did not disclose their status in terms of their disability. When asked about their age, 11 employees were between 25 and 34 years old, nine were between 35 and 44, two were between 18 and 24, and two were between 45 and 54, while none was more than 54 years old.

Four of the respondent were employed in customer services, one of respondent was a specialist acting as a controller, one was a warehouse operative, one a data entry

specialist, one a salary clerk, two were receptionists, one a designer, one worked in a call centre, one was an equipment operator, one was a co-secretary, one an administrative coordinator, one a project manager, one a reporter, one a braille teacher, four employment programme coordinators, one an employment programme supervisor, and one respondents refused to disclose his or her position.

In terms of the years that they had been working, nine had been working between 0 and 5 years, seven between 5 and 10 years, two between 10 and 15 years, while six employees had been working for 20 years or more.

The result recorded from the questionnaires for employees with disabilities reveal that most employees with disabilities had volunteered for quite some period of time previously (between 5 and 10 years). Some got their jobs as a result of school placements. It is also very interesting to note that many (eight out of the total of 24) employees got jobs through their relatives or friends who helped them with recommendations.

When asked about how satisfied they were with the recruitment process, twelve respondents says they were not satisfied with one of them even complaining that it took a whole year for him to be recruited. Another said:

Recruitment is unfortunately decreasing, because people hold negative views of our capabilities.

Another employee said:

The process changed from being humanitarian to pleasing the media and achieving the goals of the Saudisation plan.

Six respondents were satisfied, four said that it was a step forward but needed

improvement, and two did not answer the question.

When asked about suggestions to improve the recruitment process for people with disability/disabilities, nine participants emphasised the importance of placing them in a job that was suited to their abilities, six agreed that society needs more awareness regarding disability, three employees with disabilities settled for environmental preparation and assistive aids, three said there must be proper education and training for this sector of society, and three did not answer the question.

It is interesting to note that when 11 of the participants were first recruited no adjustments were made; some said this was because of neglect, others said that the management was not aware of their needs, while others explained that there were not enough employees for the company to make changes for them as there was only one employee with disabilities in the organisation. Another employee stated:

The reason for not making any adjustments is a lack of attention to our feeling and needs in addition to the slow pace that the policy was implemented in the organisation regarding preparing the environment.

While nine employees said adjustments were made when they were recruited, one employee said that there had been no need for any adjustments, another said that, when the organisation was owned by the government, no adjustments were made but once it became a private they were, and two employee did not answer the question.

Regarding the awareness of employees with disability/disabilities of adjustments that could make their jobs easier, eight employees was not aware of any adjustments, three did not answer, and 18 suggested environmental changes,

assistive aids, changes in working hours, or adjustments in tasks.

When asked whether there had been support from the management of the organisation, 15 employees answered there had been, four said not enough support, one said none, and 4 did not answer.

16 employees stated that they had received job-related training while 8 said they had not, and one stated that he had not needed training as he was a media graduate and was working as a reporter.

Eight employees with disability/disabilities emphasised the need to have the proper environment for their workplace, 2 said that help with transportation would make their job easier, 4 said they needed more training, 2 thought that they were not in the right position in terms of the job, and 8 had no comments.

It is also important to note that most employment given by the government took place through the interview process, indicating that the government has no clear policy regarding employment of people with disability. It is clear that the employment of people with disabilities was ignored in connection with the policy of Saudisation. The government set up a number of supporting entities that include ones for human resource management and development to drive the policy of Saudisation in the early 1999s; funding and corporative training was provided as were other training scheme for Saudis. "Saudi workers shall not comprise less than 75% of the total number of the company/establishment and workers and their wages shall not be less than 5% of the total wages of workers." (Article 45 of the Labour and Workmen Law of Saudi Arabia). However this policy focuses on citizens in general and young people as they make up the largest proportion of the population.

From the questionnaires it is also clear that the private sector has absorbed the

highest number of people with disabilities as a total number of 20 respondents were employed in the private sector. The Ministry of Labour in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has created and applied the Nitaqat programme that simply means 'ranges' in English (see Chapter Two for more information about the programme) in order to increase the number of job opportunities for the citizens of the Kingdom in the private sector; this might be the reason we see most people with disabilities are in private sector. The Nitaqat programme involves direct government intervention aimed at achieving quick results and also giving the nationals of Saudi Arabia a better position in the local job market which is currently dominated by foreign employees who account for up to 90% of the total employed in the private sector. The government should also adopt similar approach to increasing the number of people with disabilities employed in the government sector.

The Nitaqat programme has replaced the Saudisation job programme. Unlike Nitaqat, the Saudisation programme used a blanket approach in which the law required a 30% quota of locals in private companies irrespective of the level of economic activity or company size. Under the Nitaqat programme, the government will take time to evaluate private entities based on their nationalisation performance which is measured by calculating the percentage of Saudi Arabia nationals employed by the firm. The nationalisation performance of the companies is always calculated on a moving average method over a successive period of 13 weeks.

People with disabilities can work across almost all sectors ranging from the customer service sector, data entry, and human resource management to machine operators. The means and methods for recruitment of people with disabilities are lacking since

most of the respondents (68%) got their jobs through other people. The respondents agreed that they had not needed any kind of special training to take up their current employment or to carry out their assigned tasks.

It is also important to note that most people employed are characterised as having a physical as opposed to a mental disability, as almost 100% of the respondents were physically challenged with visual impairments, were deaf, had hearing problem, or were quadriplegic. Most respondent agreed that they desired to improve their skills and increase their experience levels in their area of specialisation. Many also work as an assistant to other employees as some respondents explain rather than as a co-workers and so can do the job better. Employers should make it easier for people with disabilities to be accepted during the interview process, in addition to weighting the result scores according to their abilities; this would increase the number of people with disabilities in both private and government sector.

5.4 Results from Phase Three (3) interviews

This section gives detailed results of the interviews carried out with employers and employees with disabilities. The first interview was carried out with a visually impaired male. After describing the research topic, the researcher asked the respondent to explain more about his employment journey. The participant explained that he had been working as a braille teacher for over 10 years in his current organisation and had started as a private (home-based) tutor; the mother of a student of his had recommended the respondent to the Ebsar Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired and he was then employed by them. This process was in keeping with the results from Phase Two (2) where the findings showed that relatives or friends had recommended most of the respondents.

The respondent believes that the employment situation in Saudi Arabia needs improvement; opportunities should be open to people with disability. It is because of this need that the Ministry of Labour has been implementing a number of plans to improve the employability of people with disabilities. In the interview with the advisor to the Minister of Labour she said,

Another programme we are working on is Qaderoon (able). Qaderoon is inspired by a company in the United Kingdom, which is the model company. When we established the programme, it was a business disability forum and was basically made of a network of business owners and people with disability. Basically, this was a non-profit company which is led by shareholders who have the aim of supporting individuals with disabilities. The shareholders are members and in order to become members they pay fees, and such contributions as are made help produce services for individuals with disabilities in all businesses sectors.

In the interview with the braille teacher, the respondent gave the example of a few students who he is teaching who are highly qualified with higher education qualifications in various fields, almost all of whom had been given work as receptionists or in call centres just because of their disabilities. He believes that they have been wrongly placed, and that the concept of hiring people with disabilities is being applied but definitely needs amendment, as there is discrimination when it comes to people with disabilities. To conceptualise this statement, the braille teacher interviewee said:

I think it needs improvement, opportunities should be more open. For example I have a few students who are highly qualified with higher education

qualifications in different fields but almost all of these have been given work as receptionists.

This statement shows that there is still a lack of awareness.

In the same area, when the interviewer sought to understand the role of awareness of employability in Ebsar, the interviewee responded:

“...that is why they approach us...we also provide written advice that will help visually impaired individuals work in terms of preparing the environment.”

In addition to this an interviewee with physical disability who works in the Ministry of Labour also added;

To be honest I worked hard to reach this position I am at right now, and I think I am lucky because during my years of experience in both jobs I met many people with disabilities who had been seeking employment for years and never got employed, especially people with disfigurements, congenital deformities, I don't know what to call it and not sound rude.

The respondent noted that there is the need to modify the environment, building, fit elevators with braille or voice controls, and, on the top of this, more is needed in relation to job training which can help the employees to perform much better, rather than just placing them in some position to fulfil the Labour Act. The researcher further inquired about positive things concerning his job and the respondent said that he believes that where that the institution has provided enough educational tools the downside is that assistive technology is only limited and mostly only works with old technology, computers etc. Other than the positives that can be

attributed to the efforts made by the Ministry, it is a concern that much is yet to be achieved by other branches of the Ministry. This is shown by the statement from the advisor who said:

You must have noticed that the ministry building (Jeddah branch) is not fully equipped in terms of details of constructions for individuals with disability, but we made a few changes like adding an access ramp, car parking, and voice command elevators all over the building. The ministry main branch in Riyadh is much more advanced because we started fixing it up first.

The respondent also believes that there are few opportunities in braille teaching. Furthermore, Saudisation has a downside, which is phantom employment, and discrimination against expatriates with disability/disabilities which is unacceptable in all its aspects.

This has been confirmed through the interview by the head of Ebsar who said:

... well, because of (Saudisation), organisations are motivated to employ people with disabilities to get better points in the (Nitaqat programme); that is why they approach us and we evaluate the available job vacancies. We also provide written advice that will help visually impaired individuals work in terms of preparation of the environment.

This statement was made when the head was asked for his opinion concerning whether Ebsar approaches the organisations or whether it is the other way around when it comes to offering of employment to those with disability/disabilities.

In the interview with a visually impaired female respondent who had worked in a private organisation as the coordinator of a recruitment programme for people with

visual impairment for a few months the interviewee commented on the employment methodology used to recruit her. She stated that at first she had been a phantom employee in the organisation; then she and other phantom employees all spoke to the head of the organisation and presented their ideas to change this. The organisation interacted positively and immediately put a programme in motion, and that is how they started working for the organisation properly.

Therefore it is clear that people with disabilities are not given priority when it comes to employment in many organisations and most of the managers are reluctant to absorb them. This finding is similar to the findings from the braille teacher who says that he believes that people with disabilities are given a raw deal when it comes to employment in both public and private sectors and most of the time are not employed in their area of specialisation resulting in job mismatches. To conceptualise this statement, the interviewee reiterated that:

At first we were all phantom employees in the organisation, afterward we all spoke to the head of the organisation as we realised that a number of us were engaged in jobs they did not qualify for. We raised our ideas and the organisation interacted positively and directly put the programme in motion and that's how we started working. But to be honest it didn't come easy we had to work very hard to get to where we are right now.

The respondent concurred with the first respondent (the braille teacher) that there is a lack of awareness among employers, hence measures should be introduced to increase awareness in business organisations about the abilities of individuals with disabilities so that organisations will become more aware that disability is not inability and that such employees can perform as well as any people without

disabilities. Secondly, awareness should be created in organisations in relation to the mechanism used for employing those who are with disability/disabilities. Lastly awareness must be spread to people with disabilities and should support them in them making themselves more visible in the labour market. The respondent believes that this will be very important in helping everyone to have positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.

One of the major challenges realised here is that work places are not prepared for people with disabilities in terms of the built environment. For example colour contrast in the workplace is important to for people who are visually impaired. The colour of the door should be different from the colour of the wall so that these can be easily distinguished from each other. It is noted that the employment of people with disabilities acts as inspiration for other people who are characterised as having a disability and are not working. This simply tells them that for them also everything is possible. Self-esteem is a very important aspect of human development and without it people tend to lose hope in terms of future and personal development.

The mismatch in job placement is also brought out here clearly, as the respondent had graduated with honours in media studies but was not employed in this field because of her disability was instead employed as a human resource or recruitment assistant.

The government programme of Saudisation is applauded by the respondent as one of the major factors that inspired organisations to seek out people with disability to employ in their organisation. Organisations are motivated to employ people with disabilities to get more points in the Nitaqat programme; this is why they approach Ebsar. In addition when people with disabilities evaluate the available job vacancies,

the organisation also provides written advice that will help visually impaired individuals work in terms of preparing for the work environment. The organisation as was also noted is very instrumental in terms of acting as a bridge between people with disabilities and the potential employers.

Similar recommendations are given on how to improve the employability of people with disabilities. Firstly, the head of Ebsar proposes increasing awareness, as those who are visually impaired should be aware of the importance of increasing their capabilities and skills of self-satiability must be a priority in all organisations when striving to achieve the objectives of both the Saudisation and Nitaqat programmes in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, the awareness of employers should be increased to improve their willingness to employ persons with disabilities or, when they have an employee who becomes disabled while he is an employee, they should receive guidance on how to rehabilitate and train such individuals in order for them to continue working and should not give them early retirement or have them leave their job. Thirdly, there is the need for policies to be introduced to provide for the need of employees with disability/disabilities such as medical insurance plans. This is apparent when the Ministry of Labour advisor makes statements such as:

The main problem we face from my perspective is phantom employment; we have 45000 employees with disability registered in the social security system as employees, but when we sent out our auditors from the ministry we couldn't actually count the exact number, because some of the organisations claim that the employees with disability/disabilities work based at home; this could be the case but another option could be that these employees are registered to achieve the Nitaqat programme points and the employers just

have the employees stay at home and get paid and not actually work not even from home. We created Nitaqat programme to introduce the process but we can't guarantee actual employment because these do exist as employees on the system.

There are still a number of challenges faced by employees with disabilities inasmuch as there are ratifications and certifications which companies that employ them are subject to.

Another existing challenge is that companies may resort to not employing people with disabilities in accordance with their areas of specialisation. For instance, when a female interviewee with visual impairment who was aged between 25 and 34 was interviewed she said:

I have graduated with honours from the media department but I wasn't employed in the same field because of my disability.

In fact the problem seems to not have been captured in Ebsar's long term agenda and plans. When the head of Ebsar was questioned regarding such issues he said:

awareness, I emphasis awareness of those who are visually impaired to increase their capabilities, and skills of self-satiability must be a priority.

Based on this, it is still hard for individuals with disabilities to secure good employment. It might be possible to make it compulsory for organisations to employ people with disability in their organisation with a specific procedure. However this might still be to the disadvantage of people with disabilities because they are not being employed on their own merits. Lastly, it is essential to improve the overall environment and access.

Some of the barriers noted during the research interview process include negative attitudes among visually impaired individuals with 20% of people with visual impairments preferring to live on social assistance rather than working. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Labour always certifies programmes for people with disabilities before allowing a given firm or company to employ such individuals. The advisor said:

...We then send trained auditors to check on the environment in an organisation; once the auditor approve we certify this organisation to be equipped for employees with disabilities, and this gives the organisation more points in (Nitaqat) which is our reinforcement and encouragement strategy that will help us achieve the goal, which is employing people with disabilities.

There are problems with poor public services and poor public transportation, urban and residential environments which are not properly adapted which make it difficult for visually impaired people to go from their place of residence to their place of work, hindering the performance of visually impaired people in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Further difficulties are due to low salaries, limited career opportunities, and rules that makes it difficult for non-native individuals with disabilities to find jobs. These are all impediments to achieving high levels of employment among people with disability/disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Over 40% of the individuals registered as being visually impaired with Ebsar are non-Saudis, and them finding employment is difficult and indeed virtually impossible as the current law is biased against non-Saudis.

The Nitaqat programme has been cited as a major stimulus in encouraging employers

to include employees with disabilities in their organisations. As much as private organisations are working towards fulfilling the requirements of the Nitaqat programme, government institutions have not left been behind as noted in the interview with the advisor to the Minister for Labour. It is noted that the Ministry of Labour is working on improving policies to serve people with special needs financially, while in the meantime the ministry is improving on previous decisions and making sure they are being applied properly to serve individuals with disabilities within the Kingdom. The ministry also works on creating policies to protect organisations and people with disabilities.

The respondent noted that the ministry building in Jeddah is not fully equipped in terms of details of modifications for individuals with disabilities, but explained that they had made a few changes such as adding an access ramp, car parking, and voice command elevators all over the building. It is also found that the ministry does not force other ministries or organisations to employ people with disabilities although it encourages them to do so. In the meantime the ministry is also working on creating educational projects for the work environment such example creating a certification system for disability rights in the private sectors based on simple standards which is called Nitaqat (ranges).

From the interview, it is also noted that the ministry sends trained auditors to check on the working environment in the organisation; once the auditor approves this, the ministry certifies that the organisation is equipped for employees with disabilities. This gives the organisation more points based on the Nitaqat programme, which is the ministry's main strategy to reinforce the need for organisations to make it possible for them to employ people with disabilities and to encourage them to

achieve that goal.

The researcher found that the ministry is implementing another programme, Qaderoon. A company in the UK which is a business disability forum was the model and inspiration for the ministry when establishing the programme. The programme is basically made up of a network of business owners and disability champions who have come together in a non-profit company. It is led by shareholders and has the aim of supporting individuals with disabilities. The shareholders are members of the network and in order to become members they pay subscriptions which help provide services for individuals with disabilities in businesses.

Other programmes initiated by the ministry include a programme developed in April 2011, Tawafiq or 'programme'. It is a specialised programme for the employment of individuals with disabilities and basically establishes a definition of employment and disability. The latest programme is called Ma'an or 'together' and involves a website which links all ministries together; any relevant mandates or decrees are posted on the website, which will help each ministry be aware of any benefits which other ministries offer. The Ministry of Labour already has policies on paper which cover with the right of individuals with disabilities to employment which is why they have also developed programmes that will help empower these individuals.

Another important key point is that the policy of employing individuals with disabilities falls within the General Labour Law Handbook; Saudi labour law does not discriminate but the law applies to all people, both those with and without disability/disabilities, with a few policies that serve those who need it. In summary, the Ministry of Labour is now working on the empowerment to employment of people with disabilities in public, private, partnership, financial, and non-financial

organisations. The ministry is developing all of these support services to improve employers' attitudes to policies regarding employment of individuals with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

5.5 Results from quantitative study

5.5.1 Employers of people with disability/disabilities

The findings from the questionnaires show that 24% of the organisations surveyed have a formal policy concerned with the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. On the other hand, 68% of the organisations had no formal policy for recruitment, while 8% did not answer the question. This implies that Saudi Arabia has been slow in implementing formal policies concerned with the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. This shows that there is still cause for concern for the policymakers. The public sector institutions have also been slow in implementing these policies as is indicated by only one of the three government institutions surveyed having such a policy in place.

Table 10: Availability of formal policy

Formal policy	Participants (%)
Availability of formal policy	24%
No formal policy	68%
No response	8%

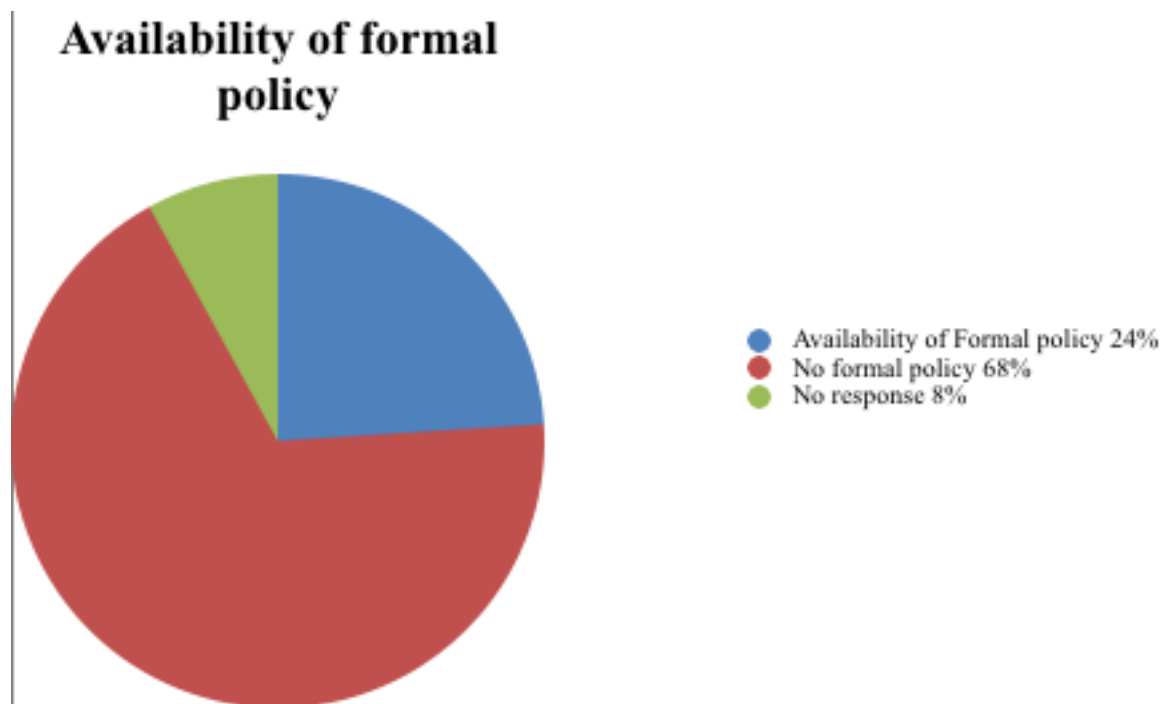


Figure 6: Availability of formal policy

A majority of the firms that had disability policies in place did not monitor the policies formally. Recruitment, training and development, promotion, sickness or absence management, and redundancy or employment termination are the dominant policies in most of the organisations. Despite this, there are few monitoring practices in relation to employees with disability/disabilities, equipment/personal support for employees with disability/disabilities, adapting working hours as necessary, adapting working environments and consulting with employees with disabilities on their needs also featured in many firms' formal policies relating to employees with disabilities. This shows that, despite awareness of the formal policy concerned with the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities, these policies are ineffective, as monitoring them is a problem.

A majority of the organisations that had not considered employing persons with disability/disabilities did not have any policies relating to persons with disabilities.

32% of the organisations surveyed had employed people with disabilities while a majority of the organisations (68%), did not employ persons with disability/disabilities. This indicates that a majority of the organisations may have negative attitudes regarding employing individuals with disabilities, hence the low rate of recruitment. This indicates that the perceptions of employers are conditioned by their cultural background and the changing attitudes of people towards individuals with disabilities in society.

Table 11: Employment of employees with disability/disabilities

Employees with disability/ disabilities	Organisations (%)
Employed persons with disability/disabilities	32%
No persons with disability/ disabilities employed	68%

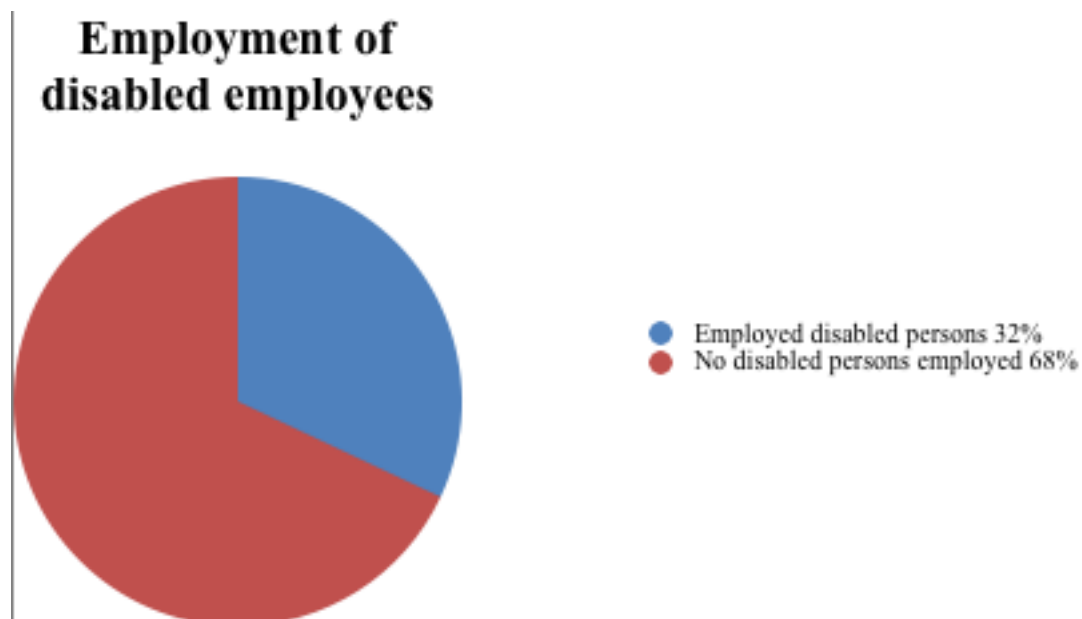


Figure 7: Employment of persons with disability/disabilities

In general, organisations with disability policies employed people with disability/disabilities, while those without disability policies did not employ anyone with disability/disabilities.

Persons with disability/disabilities were also not considered for managerial or executive positions, either due to their age or their disability. It was established that physical disabilities are the commonest type of disabilities in Saudi Arabia and are mostly found among persons aged between 25 and 34 years old, most of whom are engaged in professional and skilled service occupations. Few of the persons with disability/disabilities in employment are in managerial or administrative positions, whilst some were involved in routine and unskilled activities.

This shows that the decisions of policymakers and employers in relation to talented employees with disability/disabilities are shaped by bias; there are lower employment expectations regarding employees with disability/disabilities employees which perpetuates perceptions of them as being inferior, risky prospects, and undesirable. In such cases, the low expectations become reinforced by the disability and ineffective policies. In such a case, the discriminatory treatment of the employees with disability/disabilities will prevail in many aspects of employment. Cases of underemployment will also arise, as employees with disabilities are designated for low-status and low-skilled jobs.

Additionally, a majority of the organisations do not provide persons with disability/disabilities with the appropriate tools which would enable them to perform their work as required. Only 18% of the organisations provide employees with disability/disabilities with special equipment, modify workplaces, provide flexible working patterns, or alter jobs to suit employees with disabilities.

Facilitate disabled employees

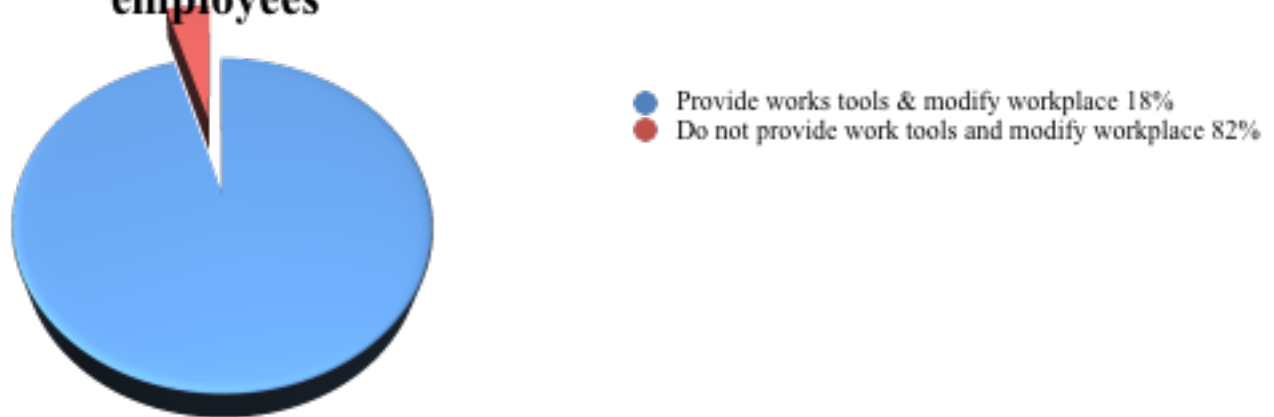


Figure 8: Percentage of employers facilitating employees with disability/disabilities

The statistics show that persons with disability/disabilities are not provided with an accommodative environment or assistive tools or technology. Apparently, they are given lower priority than able-bodied workers. This also indicates that the workplace environment contributes significantly to many persons with disability/disabilities being disregarded, underemployed or unemployed in spite of their competence. Furthermore the majority of the organisations surveyed indicated they do not implement job sharing since they claim they use very competent although physically challenged individuals. Few of the organisations provided training, counselling, and additional incentives on the job.

A small number of the organisations agree that implementing changes to favour people with disability/disabilities in the organisations is easy. 12% of the organisations had not recruited them based on competence rather than disability.

Among the main reasons given for not employing people with disabilities was that they have not submitted any job applications for positions in the firm. 32% of the organisations did not employ people with disabilities because no-one with a disability had applied for employment in the organisation. 30% of the organisations

had failed to employ them because they feared the additional costs entailed in making adjustments to absorb employees with disabilities and that an employee with disability creates additional workload for HR staff management and requires increased supervisory time.

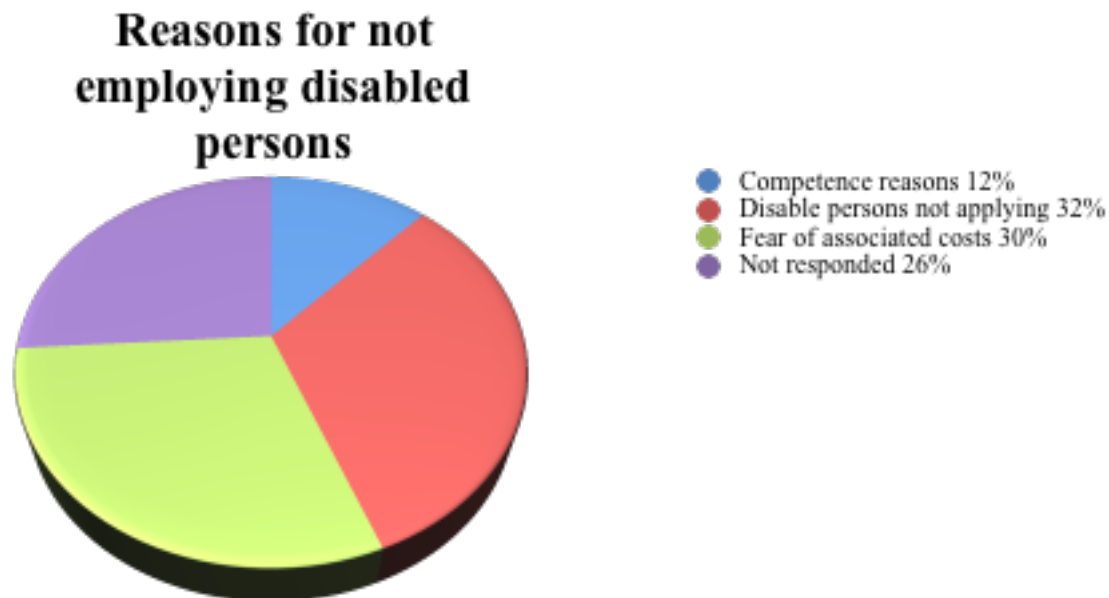


Figure 9: Reasons given for not employing people with disability/disabilities

This shows that while the majority of the employees with disability/disabilities shy away from applying for top positions in the organisation, many organisations also shy away from employing them due to the fear of costs related to recruiting them and providing them with assistive technology. This also indicates that most employers are ill-prepared, and have not created an appropriate environment for individuals with disabilities.

This also indicates the importance of increasing knowledge about disability and that awareness is an important factor in creating a positive attitude towards disability. Consistent with this, there is also a general lack of awareness among employers concerning the needs of persons with disability/disabilities. This implies the need to create awareness among business organisations regarding the abilities of individuals

with disabilities so that employers become more aware that disability is not inability and that persons with disabilities can perform a job as well as other people without disabilities.

There is also the need to create awareness among organisations to encourage them to adopt an appropriate mechanism for the recruitment and management of persons with disability/disabilities. Lastly, awareness must be created among people with disabilities to encourage them to make their presence known in the labour market, as this will enable individuals without disability/disabilities to develop positive attitude towards people with disabilities.

Only 8% of the organisations considered adjusting their workplace environments to fit the needs of persons with disability/disabilities. This shows that most organisations that eventually recruit persons with disability/disabilities are not structuring the work environment to address their needs. They also do not provide relevant job training that would help improve the performance of persons with disability/disabilities. This leads to a situations where individuals with disabilities are less productive than able-bodied workers. This implies that supported employment is vital, as it improves the competence and performance of the persons with disability/disabilities. A supported employment, such one where a job coach is provided would contribute significantly to the competence of individuals with disabilities. Despite this, few organisations consider integrating job coaching.

A majority of the participants agree that people with disabilities should be provided with proper training to enable them to join the work force. However few participants recommended that organisations should be forced with legislation and policies to have a certain percentage of employees with disability/disabilities.

A small number of participants also recommended that awareness regarding individuals with disabilities must be spread in order to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities as well as the awareness that providing a suitable environment that meets their needs will also make them better able to work. This provides evidence suggesting that the actual workplace environments contribute significantly to the unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities and exacerbation of their conditions, especially those with mental illness and disability.

The majority of the participants also agreed that employing people with disability/disabilities in the workplace is a social responsibility to the community. Few of the employees said that the advantage gained was that the policy of Saudisation and “Nitaqat Sachem” were being complied with.

The majority of the employers believed in the potential of the employees. Indeed, most participants also agreed that lack of experience in dealing with individuals with disabilities may contribute significantly to their low employment levels. Most of the participants also mentioned that their organisations were reluctant to hire employees with disabilities because their work environment does not support them. Few of the organisations with employees with disabilities mentioned that they had faced challenges, despite having been initially reluctant to recruit persons with disability/disabilities.

5.5.2 Employees with disabilities

Of the employees with disability/disabilities surveyed, 50% revealed that they are satisfied with the recruitment process, whilst only 12% were dissatisfied.

Table 12: Level of satisfaction with recruitment process

Level of satisfaction	Participants (%)
Satisfied	50
Not satisfied	12
No response	38

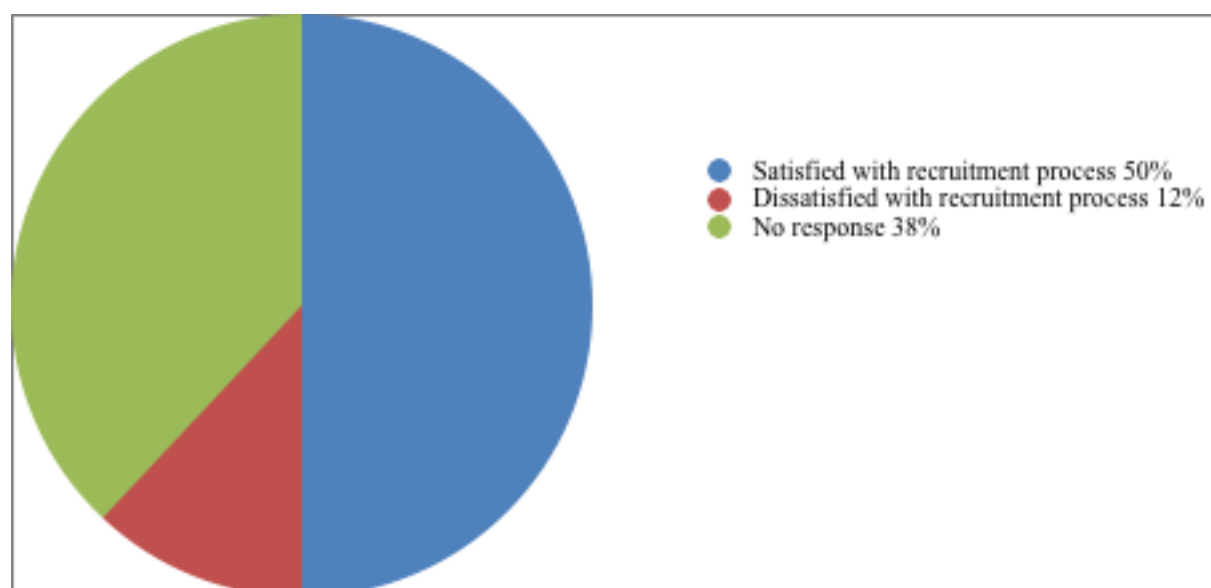


Figure 10: Level of satisfaction with the recruitment process

12% of the employees with disability/disabilities also expressed concern that people generally held negative views regarding their capabilities. 46% of the employees said that their managers are neither aware of their needs nor do they provide proper adjustments to enable them to fit into their organisation.

18% of the employees with disability/disabilities feel that placing them in a suitable job based on their abilities solves recruitment concerns while 12% wanted greater public awareness of their needs. 6% want environment preparation programmes and the provision of assistive aids. Another 6% advocate for proper learning and training in society and organisations.

Table 13: Solutions suggested by employees with disability/disabilities to challenges faced

Solutions to challenges	Participant (%)
Suitable job	18
Greater public awareness	12
Environment preparation programmes	6
Training and learning	6

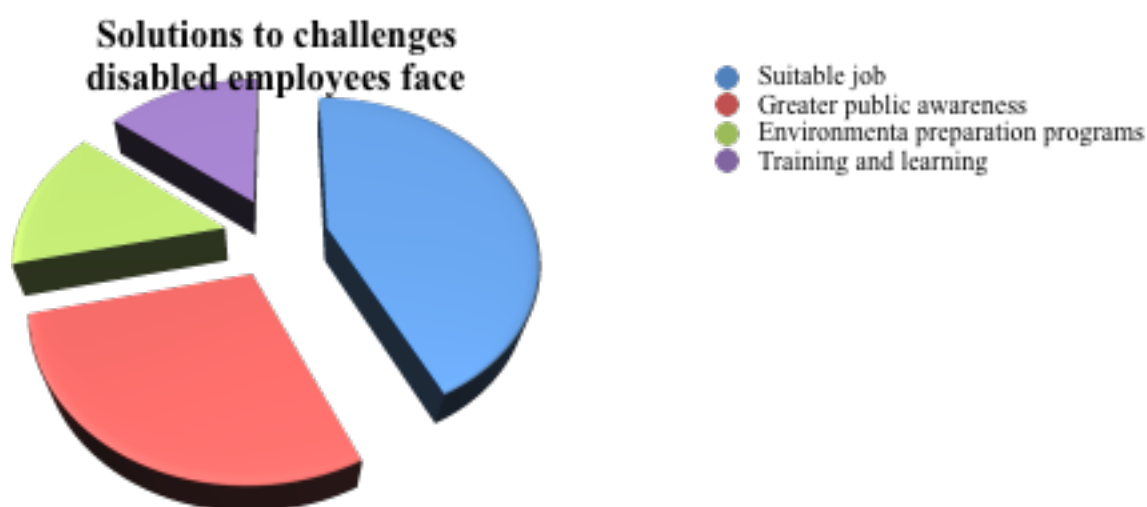


Figure 11: Solutions suggested by employees with disability/disabilities to challenges faced

Nevertheless 67% of the participants agreed they had been provided with job-related training (rather than training based on their disabilities) while 33% said they did not need training. This implies that there is little concern in this area among employees with disability/disabilities, as feel they are provided with sufficient job-related training which meets their needs.

It seems that the workplace environment contributes significantly to inefficiency, underemployment, and unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities. This indicates the need for 'supported employment.' Additionally, the recruiters are not concerned about the needs of employees with disability/disabilities. There is the same level of indifference to the needs of employees with disability/disabilities

within the public sector. The majority of employees with disability/disabilities from the public sector explained that the government has no clear policy regarding the employment of people with disabilities. This demonstrates the need for policies to clarify recruitment procedures for employees with disability/disabilities.

5.6 Results from qualitative approach

The majority of respondents agree on the need to structure the work environment in such a way as to meet their disability needs and to provide relevant job training that can help them perform much better. Indeed, this suggestion has been earlier discussed in a study of employment and disability in the United States by Gottlieb et al. (2015).

Gottlieb et al. (2015) argued that training and supervising individuals with disabilities is essential and should be based on the sheltered employment model which assumes that individuals with disabilities tend to be less productive compared to able-bodied workers who are usually paid higher wages than those paid to people with disabilities. Gottlieb et al. (2015) further suggested that supported employment is vital and should use an integrated model of employment, for example a job coach should train the person with disability/disabilities in a specific role.

Despite this apparent need for an accommodative environment, the majority of the participants including those in government institutions claim that, while the organisations have provided sufficient educational tools, they provided limited assistive technology. Khalema and Shankar (2014) also provided evidence suggesting that workplace environments contribute significantly to the unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities and the aggravation of their conditions, especially among those with mental illness and disability.

Regarding employment opportunities, the majority of the participants expressed the opinion that there are limited employment opportunities, including the braille teacher who claimed that there were few opportunities for him. This perspective was examined initially by Gottlieb et al. (2015). According to Gottlieb et al. (2015), employees with disability/disabilities should be assisted throughout the employment process as well as in terms of the environment in which they operate. Gottlieb et al. (2015) defined such assistance as ‘supported employment’; this is based on the philosophical concept of self-determination.

The majority of participants also acknowledged that people with disabilities are not given priority when it comes to employment in many organisations and that most managers were reluctant to absorb them. This can be seen in recruitment, where some workers are first hired as phantom workers before they are considered for actual employment. This is despite the fact that employees with disability/disabilities have been found to be intrinsically committed to work.

In an earlier study, Abu-Habib (1997) found that people with disabilities are more organised than their counterparts. They also took a pro-active role in their workplaces when given due recognition. Abu-Habib (1997) concluded that the concept of people with disabilities seeking equal opportunities as is practiced in Lebanon, offers an ideal model for how people with disabilities should be treated in Saudi Arabia. People with disabilities have also specifically asked the government of Saudi Arabia for provision of more disability services in the country and to provide employment policies specifically directed to aid people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

At the same time, most of the participants stated that the employees with

disability/disabilities were engaged in jobs they were not qualified in. This idea is consistent with the results from a study by Basas (2009) which also observed that most workers with disability/disabilities find themselves in jobs for which they are over-qualified. Basas (2009) suggested that the employees with disability/disabilities are disregarded and underappreciated in competitive employments. He also showed that policymakers' views of talented employees with disability/disabilities are shaped by bias; they have lower employment expectations in relation to the employees with disability/disabilities which perpetuate perceptions of them as inferior, high-risk, and undesirable. Basas (2009) further points out that these low expectations are cemented by the disability and ineffective policies.

Thornton and Lunt (n.d.) also comment that the discrimination process starts with the onset of the disability and prevails in many aspects of employment. They added that employees with disability/disabilities are also disadvantaged by underemployment, as they are generally given low-status and low-skilled jobs.

Consistent with this, the participants with disability/disabilities also agree that there is a general lack of awareness among the employers concerning their needs, and subsequently promoted the idea of the need to create awareness in business organisations regarding the abilities of individuals with disabilities so that they will be more aware that disability is not inability, and that people with disabilities can perform as well as any other people without disabilities (Wonacott, 2003). They also proposed the need to create awareness in organisations to encourage them to adapt the mechanism used for the recruitment and management of persons with disability/disabilities. Lastly, they considered that awareness must be spread among

people with disabilities and should encourage them to make their presence known in the labour market.

Both groups of respondents believe that it is very important for everyone to have positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. These perceptions are supported by Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) who made similar remarks when discussing the importance of increasing knowledge about disability, as awareness is to be considered an important factor in creating a positive attitude towards disability.

Most of the participants also mentioned that organisations feared the costs associated with employing employees with disability/disabilities so that organisations hesitate to employ them. In a related study, Kaye et al. (2011) dismissed the idea that costs linked to hiring employees with disability/disabilities such as the cost of accommodation are significant compared to the cost of retaining experienced workers with disability/disabilities and their productivity. In his review of literature, Kaye et al. (2011) established that only a small minority of employers cited concerns over associated cost as a reason for not employing workers with disabilities. Basas (2009) also established that the majority of the workplaces are ill-prepared, specifically in relation to the built environment, for individuals with disabilities.

In order to assist individuals with disabilities to secure good employment, the participants recommended that a policy should be established which makes it compulsory for organisations to employ people with disabilities. However, the policies may follow set procedures which may still be to the disadvantage of people with disabilities. Additionally, policies should also be in place requiring the improvement of the overall environment and easy access.

The majority of the respondents also praised the government programme of Saudisation which they perceive to be a critical success factor in inspiring organisations to look for individuals with disability and to allow them to work efficiently in the organisation. The issue of the role of the government in promoting the employability of people with disability/disabilities has been examined in a study by Furuoka et al (2011). Here the researchers established that governments across the globe have introduced a range of labour laws or regulations that encourage organisations to hire and retain persons with disability/disabilities. Furuoka et al. (2011) concluded that a lack of such policies is likely to make the employers less aware of their social obligations towards people with disability/disabilities. Hence, the issue of awareness is also of critical importance. In the present study, a majority of the participants recommended intensified awareness creation among employers regarding the needs of the employees with disability/disabilities. This view is shared by Furuoka et al. (2011).

Regarding the challenges people with disabilities face in employment, the participants identified various factors such as poor public services, poor public transportation, and hostile urban and residential environments. The issue of poor attitudes also came up among some workers as a factor inhibiting their successful recruitment. Consistent with these findings, Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003) argued that the employers who tend to have positive and helpful attitudes towards people with disabilities are those who seek to create good relationships with them. It is therefore difficult for policymakers to establish special employment programmes within Saudi Arabia based on the arguments of Al-Abdulwahab and Al-Gain (2003). The issue of attitudes was also tackled by Kaye et al. (2011). Following his systematic review of the literature, Kaye et al. (2011) concluded that most

employer surveys showed that attitudes frequently hindered the hiring of employees with disability/disabilities. They concluded that workers and jobseekers with disability/disabilities often cited poor employer attitudes and workplace discrimination as issues which prevent them from being employed.

5.7 Conclusion

Based on the data obtained from the interviews and questionnaires, there are a number of findings that can be formulated. First, in the 50 institutions accessed, there is an indication that they align all guidelines and policies to governmental legislation and policies, especially with respect to employment equity requirements for people with disabilities. However as the head of Ebsar noted, there is the need for constant follow-up to ensure compliance with these policies as there are a number of cases where there is some laxity in this area. In addition, there are some organisations that have only one general policy promoting equality in the workplace, the reason provided being that they do not intend to discriminate against any individual with respect to race, gender or disability.

It can be concluded from the questionnaire responses that there is a lack of internal policy with respect to the employment of people with disabilities; in some organisations this may be a contributing factor to the difficulties that they are experiencing in meeting their equity targets as per the regulations of the Ministry of Labour. It is encouraging to see from the data that some organisations utilise their internal policy to formulate guidelines to assist in overcoming the very same difficulties. The supervisors and/or managers worked together in this area, with some organisations reporting that, although they were aware of the internal policy, they had not seen any positive effects from its implementation in that the organisation had not met its equity targets. It can thus be concluded that although

policies and guidelines are in place, it appears that they are not always implemented effectively.

Still on the subject of the same data, the government should come up with a policy that can help people with disabilities to be trained to take up the jobs they are more interested in since self-interest also boosts performance. The head of Ebsar gives a detailed account of the employment policy in the institution which specifically deals with visually impaired individuals. He stated that when hiring into the organisation, the strategy is to help people with visual impairment feel equal to healthy people in terms of employment, explaining that, depending on the work opportunities available, the organisation gives priority to people with visual impairments when the job does not require any visual ability. However, this is a non-profit making organisation which deals specifically with individuals with visual impairments. The organisation is one that helps increase the number of institutions which hire people with disabilities by developing contracts with institutions willing to hire, helping them choose the candidates and evaluate each case psychologically, visually and according to their specialty or field of expertise. The organisation also funds work-related training to prepare individuals with visual impairment to work and provides advice to either the employee or employer when needed.

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses findings from the data collected using the aforementioned research tools. The study provides both a quantitative and a qualitative overview of the situation for people with disability/disabilities and employment policies and the labour market in Saudi Arabia. The major labour market integration policies in all regions/provinces are presented together with the latest available data and figures regarding employment policies within the country. It has been established that Saudi Arabia has laws that cover individuals with disabilities in the workplace. To be specific, an organisation can be sued within a civil court for discriminating against people with disabilities under national anti-discriminatory laws. However it is known that practically no lawsuits have been brought in Saudi Arabia because such people are rarely employed, or are employed as “phantom employees”. This on the one hand means they are employed in the system, however are getting paid to stay home, but have in actual fact not joined the workforce.

6.2 Discussion of the data presented

As Dahlgren (2005) also finds, outside of laws and lawsuits that intend to streamline employment for people with disabilities by means of policies, this research also finds that Saudi Arabia still faces other key challenges with regard to people with disabilities. Looking at the statistics from the 50 organisations recommended for investigation by the Ministry of Labour it can be seen that there is low employment among people with different disabilities which confirms that fact that the country is still lacking an appropriate strategy and policy that addresses the employability of people with disabilities.

This translates into a high dependency on benefits, increased public spending on

disability benefits or health care as well as a greater risk of poverty among those with disabilities. This discussion is also supported by the revised Lisbon Strategy with respect to policies guiding employment of people with disabilities in rural areas in Arabian countries (Gibson & Abrams, 2003). This is to say that inasmuch as there are labour codes which this study has reviewed (Labour Code Law legislated in 1969 emphasises mainly labour rights and focuses on detailed vocational rehabilitation for people with disabilities, and the Basic System, Article 27, legislated in 1992), neither the goal of a general employment rate of 70% by 2020 nor the new European Union directives look as though they will be achieved following the introduction of these policies, especially in rural areas.

On the other hand, this study finds that, in the last decade, government has placed increasing emphasis on strengthening the labour market and social inclusion of people with disabilities. As noted in Chapter Five of the study, recruitment, training and development, promotion, sickness or absence management, and redundancy or terminations are the dominant policies in most of the organisations, and policies such as the Regulation of Rehabilitation Programme No. 1355 which looks towards establishing a rehabilitation programme through the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs to prepare persons with disabilities for employment generation in the country can be mentioned as one such programme.

It is worth noting therefore that the country has been successful in some areas and in fact has explicitly achieved movement away from passive to active measures which has been brought about by the implementations of legislative instruments and policies (such as obligatory employment quota schemes, anti-discrimination legislation, job protection rights) which Chapter Two also identified as measures

which have been introduced in the country to ensure people with disabilities have equal employment opportunities. Integrating this with Decree No. 129 which was legislated in the year 1976 as policy, it can be agreed that the country has targeted active labour market policies which aim to support the participation of people with disability/disabilities in the labour market.

Still on the subject of the emphasis that the government has placed on these measures, the data as described in Chapter Five (13 of the 50 managers indicating that their organisation actively encourage job applications from people with disabilities) are characterised by discrete efforts and changes in policies with regard to employment measures for people with disabilities. Previous research has noted that in some regions (Asir Province) the dominant policy is the 'mainstreaming disability model' which the study implies does not just mean people with disabilities should be provided with special employment services but that there should be approved measures to improve employability for individuals with disabilities in all policy domains within the region.

This argument is indeed embedded in labour and employment law that seeks to generate employment opportunities for people with disabilities by establishing and organising the institutions needed to provide vocational training services to people with disabilities which it is shown from the data collected to be in demand for both employees with disability/disabilities and employers. In contrast, in other regions (i.e. Hejaz Province), policy approaches such as 'special and separate employment' for people with disabilities have been called into question thus confirming the emphasis on mainstreaming and inclusion.

Another point to note from the research is that Saudi Arabia, from the policies

identified, have targeted the active labour market so as to further the social integration of individuals with disabilities, partly through financial incentives given to employers with the record of employing individuals with disabilities. Furthermore the government has set up vocational training and rehabilitation centres.

To conceptualise this argument, Chapter Two identified the Seventh Development Plan (2001-2005) as focusing intensely on developing strict laws to improve employment policies for people with disabilities along with encouraging co-operatives and charities to develop economic and social projects and programmes which encourage employment among people with disabilities. For instance, the study by Abdulmajeed (2005) cites the fact that in 2005 a number of rehabilitation programmes and changes were introduced which affect the rate at which people with disabilities were employed (see also Hudson, 2005). This even argues for the fact that the matching working ability and earning capacity is often taken into consideration in cases where people with disabilities who are Saudi Arabian have difficulties in fulfilling job demands and their working ability has gone down by more than 40%.

This trend can be confirmed by the argument in Chapter Two where the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs are described as been providing social benefits to people with disabilities who live mostly outside social institution. As explained most aid programmes are run for children who are paralysed and living with their family; these aid programmes provide a maximum allowance of SR 10,000 per annum (almost 2,000 GBP) for each child who is paralysed. There are also aid programmes for people with disabilities who are cared by their own families, with a

maximum of SR 10,000 per annum for severe disabilities and SR 6,000 (almost 1000 GBP) for people with disabilities who are not benefitting from vocational rehabilitation programmes. This is not different from the Unit Strategy of 2005 which agitated for a pilot programme dubbed “Pathways to Work” which aimed to help people with disabilities manage the process from switching off receiving benefits to returning to work. “Pathways to Work” in particular paid attention to professional rehabilitation and improving the ability of people with disabilities to engage or participate in the labour market. These are policies that indeed further the social integration of people with disabilities.

The data as presented in Chapters Four and Five, shows that in 2012 the share of individuals with severe disabilities who were unemployed amounted to 4.8% males and 3.5% women which highlights the idea that the labour market situation for women seems the more active. From this statistics, it can be concluded that women with disabilities have what this study has explained as “sheltered employment”. With sheltered employment, there are always different workshops where individuals with diverse disabilities are offered employment opportunities.

The statistics in Chapter Three further indicate that, since 2000, the number of individuals with disabilities engaging in sheltered employment has gone up in almost all of El Hasa Province - the Eastern region of the country.

To understand this point in a different dimension, the data such as that discussed under ‘Labour Market Position of Disabled Individuals in Saudi Arabia’ shows the distribution of people with disability by their labour force status. In El Hasa Province where data on unemployment, low employment and inactivity status are available, this study finds low employment, relatively high unemployment levels or rather

instances of inactivity among people with disabilities. While it can be seen that policies implemented support employment for individuals with disabilities, this research reveals that whether these individuals are recorded as inactive or unemployed may partly be a consequence of procedures used in the process of recording data in the administrative registers.

It is for this reason that central government looks to specialised external services to assist employment offices for the placement of certain groups of peoples with disabilities and to support the various established welfare agencies to provide continuous assistance to people with disabilities once they have a workplace. Furthermore, statistics from different registries and administrative areas indicate that most provinces within the country support employment of people with disability. Additionally, the employment of these people has increased overall in almost all regions in Saudi Arabia, with positive trends in employment rates being brought about by these policies (a good example in this is the policy of Saudisation). At the same time, unemployment declined in a number of regions.

Since the implementation of the Saudisation programme and now with the Nitaqat programme, employment among people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia has been rising markedly as it has in other countries such as France, Germany and Poland. Looking at the statistics as illustrated in the data analysis, monitoring practices aimed at supporting employees such as disability equipment/personal support for employees with disabilities, adapting working hours as necessary, adapting the working environment, and consulting with employees with disabilities on their needs, have featured in a number of firms especially regarding formal policies directed towards employees with disabilities.

From this it can be concluded that there has been an increase in employment and at the same time a decrease in both inactivity and unemployment among people with disabilities in the country. Thus, Saudi Arabia is a country with a good if not fully satisfactory record regarding the integration of people with disabilities into labour market (details on the same have been highlighted in Chapter Five where the questionnaire for employers of individuals with disabilities has been discussed).

Another aspect that has been revealed from policies on the regulation of the employment of individuals with disability is the issue of age and gender. From results presented, it can be seen that Saudi Arabia has more women with disabilities in ordinary employment than men. In regions such as Nejd Province for instance, most people with disabilities employed in ordinary jobs are women aged between 45 and 50 years. Table in Chapter Three shows the number of people with disabilities by area and type of disability with different classifications by degree of disability for Nejd Province and other provinces. Therefore according to this table, the distribution of individuals in ordinary employment by extent or degree of disability shows that individuals with a relatively moderate and minor degree of disability are normally working or employed in normal jobs as well as those with minor degrees of disability who are normally working in basic or ordinary employment, and the less 'reduced ability or capacity to work' share in basic or ordinary employment increases, contrary to what is experienced in other regions such as Nejd Province.

However, it needs to be noted that the government has been constantly seeking to develop employment policies for individuals with disabilities by providing jobs which are best suited to persons characterised as having specific kinds of disabilities. Special jobs have been developed in governmental bodies which provide

employment for the intellectually and hearing impaired. The data from this study showed no employees with intellectual impairments among those who were employed; in a previous study the same table shows that in Nejd Province, the highest share comes from those with medium-levels of disability. However, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2002) found, in Asir the highest share is from those who are substantially limited physically and from those with severe vision or hearing impairment.

Connecting this with age and gender and employment policies in Saudi Arabia, we find that most working or employed people with disabilities have a range of age and gender stratifications. This study concludes that policies that have been established have enabled people with disabilities aged between 25 and 44 to dominate job markets. However, there are exceptions in some regions where this study acknowledges that almost 70% of those employed in middle-level industries are aged over 45 years, while in Asir the figure is only 45%. Additionally, looking at the same table, the number of males with disability/disabilities in these industries is generally much higher compared to the number of females, the only exceptions being regions dominated by industry and or organisations. In connection with this, we see that disabilities are more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas as these areas definitely lack opportunities to benefit from special programmes and government initiatives to deal with the issue. Consequently, employment policies in the rural areas are also much less strict in terms of their practical implications than is the case in urban areas.

Discussing the results and data as presented, it has been found that unemployment according to age and gender differs significantly in different regions/provinces

within the country. It from this data that the study finds that the highest number of citizens throughout the country who registered as unemployed are aged 45 years and above. In other regions which are closer to the seat of government, the highest shares is within the age bracket of 24 to 50. When this is broken down by type or degree of disability in regions such as Asir, there is the indication that the unemployed are mostly those with intellectual or mental handicaps.

The main reason for this is that, inasmuch as the Ministry of Health alongside the Ministry of Employment in Saudi Arabia in the last two decades has established various rehabilitative services for persons with disabilities, the majority of these programmes cannot effectively provide physical, occupational, speech and hearing therapy to ensure that people with disabilities are properly trained and capable of understanding their jobs and generating a livelihood for themselves. The available information and data has indicated that with regard to the duration of periods of unemployment, policies that have been mentioned in the study have not improved the status of those with disability/disabilities in the country. As a matter of fact, countries such as France and Canada that have shown positive trends cannot be compared with Saudi Arabia as these countries have the lowest number of unemployed individuals with disabilities per every six months of the study. Thus we see that in the current economic scenario of Saudi Arabia there are various employment policies for people with disabilities; however, a lot of employment policies still need to be drafted as per international standards and a complete system put in place to ensure that the policies are actually practiced in reality.

Looking again at spending on supported employment and the Active Labour Market Employment Policy (ALMEP) discussed in Chapter Two, this study finds that spending

on ALMEP with regards to disability varies considerably among Middle-Eastern countries, since employment policies are designed differently in each country. But it can be noted that, with ALMEP, differences for countries such as Ireland and England if compared with those in Saudi Arabia are the highest when looking at the number of unemployed males with disability/disabilities compared to unemployed females. The main thing that seems to be contributing to this difference is that the Ministry of Labour has been striving to continuously develop employment policies to provide more and more jobs for persons with disabilities in the country. However, the discussion in Chapter Two showed that the different jobs allocated to persons with disabilities are mainly legislators, senior officers and managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerks, skilled workers and elementary occupations.

Infrastructure, workplace development and incentives to employers are another element that has been investigated in the study. Looking at policies such as the Disabled Persons Employment Act which requires persons with a degree of at least 50% disability to be registered to qualify for some associated benefits, it can be seen that Saudi Arabia has taken significant steps towards adapting the relevant infrastructure in the work place which has been achieved through various incentives and sources of funding so as to provide subsidies to employers to offer employment to people with disabilities.

For instance, the Ministry of Labour gives a one-off contribution to employees who provide jobs for those with disability/disabilities. There are also contributions which public authorities can offer as tax advantages and payments for operational costs. The study has also established that employment opportunities for those with

disability/disabilities have risen convincingly due to policies such as those practiced by the Ministry of Labour where there are general tax incentives offered under given conditions to entities who can provide work for trainees or individuals with different disabilities which according to the statistics that have been provided in Chapters Two and Three amount to 55% to 70%. Interestingly, this policy does not support the fact that in recent years the number of working age individuals with disability/disabilities in the public sector has been growing at different rates when one considers the sex of the employees. The main reason attributed to this is access to infrastructure, workplace development and incentives. This study notes that Saudi culture tends to limit females more than males which has greatly affected access to infrastructure, workplace development, and incentives.

On a different note, looking at the data presented on types of jobs for persons with disability/disabilities (prevalent percentage by occupation), the policy in the Disabled Persons Employment Act requires persons with a degree of disability of at least 50% to be registered to qualify for the associated benefits. Connecting this policy with earlier data that has been cited, the research finds that the number of female employees with disability/disabilities has been rapidly on the increase compared to cases of males especially with the expansion of the public sector. That is, the number of women with disability/disabilities who are working in the public sector has been increasing steadily; indeed this study can predict that if the trend continues, by 2020 there will be over 100,000 women with disability/disabilities in different sectors.

Owing to the fact that the education level of persons with disabilities is not up to the standard demands and norms of financial institutions (this has been established

through the literature review) and further that the demand for unskilled labour is declining with the modern use of machines and technologies in every industrial field, it is found that the increase in employment among both males and females with disability/disabilities is concentrated in the health service and local government, and the rates of growth as seen in these areas are more than twice that for employees without disability/disabilities.

It has been noted in the study that the practice of public and private organisations providing employment in Saudi Arabia is well supported by members of the Royal family. This support comprises, among other things, raising donations and initiating social initiatives to ensure that equal and liberal policies are developed for people with disability/disabilities and to guarantee a better life for people suffering from disabilities. As a matter of fact, the study noted that specialised organisations such as the hospitals of the National Guard, the Military, Social Security and others provide extended service to people with disabilities as a part of their service to the community.

Taking this policy into consideration, the study finds that with the expansion of the public sector, the number of female employees has increased faster than that of men. This can be supported by the data showing that the number of women with disability/disabilities who have secured work in the public sector have increased by over 24 percent. However, the increase in employees was concentrated in local government and the health service with the latter taking the biggest share.

The research has also indicated that several royal foundations are very active in developing better infrastructures for people with disabilities along with being seriously committed to providing and generating employment for the same group as

a part of the social welfare system. It is for this reason that the study finds that this policy meant that people with disability/disabilities are comparatively less likely to work in the public sector than those without.

This is further backed by the Seventh Development Plan (2001-2005) which focused intensely in developing strict laws to develop employment policies aimed to promote employability of individuals with disabilities in the public sector. Looking at the statistics released in the Seventh Development Plan (2001-2005) it can be seen that between 2002 and 2004 about 12 percent of working-age people with disability/disabilities have public sector jobs in comparison to 14 percent without disability/disabilities. According to Graham (2007) this is a figure that had since improved considering the fact that, before the Seventh Development Plan (2001-2005), the former made up just 7 percent. The reason for this is that about 8 percentage points can be understood as the level or extent to which individuals with disability/disabilities are disadvantaged in relation to obtaining or keeping jobs in the public sector or relative to those without. It needs to be noted that regardless of the increasing number of people with disability/disabilities in the public sector (attributed to the introduction of public policies such as Seventh Development Plan 2001-2005), there are still elements of inequality in the proportions of people with and without disability/disabilities engaged in the public sector which did not diminish during the study period. Consequently, with regard to the public sector, this study finds that individual with mental health problems or ones with learning difficulties are in most cases disadvantaged when it comes to obtaining or keeping public sector employment. On a similar note, it is found certain minority groups of people with disabilities such as those with learning difficulties were at the same time under-represented in the public sector.

Another area of data that needs to be discussed is that concerning employment circumstances and characteristics of employees with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The best way to discuss this point is to base the argument on the collection of area- and gender-specific data. It has been found that, on average, employees with disability/disabilities in most parts of Saudi Arabia are basically seven to eight years older than their counterparts without disability/disabilities, and the figure is currently stands at about 43 percent for people with disability/disabilities who are aged 50 years and above. This is compared with about 30 percent for employees without disability/disabilities. This study also finds that, whether with or without disability/disabilities, almost two-thirds of employees have been found to be women, and these are more likely than their counterparts (men) to work part-time. This clearly implies that there is a smaller number of females with severe or overlapping disabilities and there is a lower invisible barrier to women to improving themselves by vocational rehabilitation. However, a cross-analysis by area, gender and other factors is important in better understanding the current scenario. This argument is also related to muscular-skeletal conditions that have been reported as the main health-related problems or disabilities according to data presented earlier (also see research by Jarviluoma et al., 2008). Due to these complaints the government through the Ministry of Labour established the Ebsar Society for Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired which launched a recruitment programme to provide jobs to the visually impaired in the private sector. Ebsar is in partnership with Al Rabie Saudi Foods Company, a leading producer of juices and food products in Saudi Arabia. However, this is in contrast with the fact that employees with disability/disabilities are less likely those without to occupy more senior managerial, technical and professional positions, and that differences when it comes to

occupational status are more marked or prevalent between those with and without disability/disabilities. The study also finds that workers with disability/disabilities in most sectors are less likely to have taken part in any recent job-related rehabilitation or training, partly due to the fact that they were older and perhaps more likely to occupy lower-status jobs compared to employees without disability/disabilities.

The literature review and research methodology captured details on employers' practices and attitudes linked to the employment of people with disability/disabilities. Firstly this study admits, based on findings from previous studies reviewed in this study that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions based on employer surveys on what it means to study employers' attitudes and practices in the process of the employment of people with disability/disabilities. This is because these surveys define disability and employment in different ways.

Additionally, findings specific to public sector employment of people with disability/disabilities are not systematically presented in the research reports analysed. Based on these statements, Saudi Arabia shows the highest employment rates for people with disability/disabilities among other Arab countries especially when this is based on what the researchers referred to previously believe to be disability. Again, basing on an understanding of what disability is as per Gordon (2000), policies such as Active Labour Market Employment Policy (ALMEP), a core aspect of Saudi Arabian employment strategy has not improved the employability of individuals with disabilities in areas such as Hejaz Province.

As a matter of fact, employment for individuals with disability/disabilities in these regions has remained much lower - in some cases it is even reported at 25% as

compared to the level in other regions which is 40%. This research also finds that the employment rate among people with disabilities which is reported in Hejaz Province is higher than the rates seen in other regions (for those with the lowest qualifications). Interestingly, data from the study of central affirmative action as one of the policies adopted on behalf of persons with disabilities shows that the low unemployment as witnessed in some regions can be matched by a high rate of inactivity among people with disability/disabilities in these regions which this study uncovered. As a matter of fact, taking into consideration the so called marginalised areas of Saudi Arabia, the rate of unemployment for people with disability/disabilities is below the European Union average of 15%. The only data from this study that can help create an understanding of how central affirmative action has helped increase employment among people with disability/disabilities is the National Survey of Disability and Rehabilitation in Saudi Society (Al-Turaiki, 2000) inasmuch as, according to Al-Turaiki, this research managed to include men and women aged between 18 and 65 years.

Another challenge in this research is that there are three different definitions of disability used in the entire research. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) came up with regular statistical briefings regarding the employment of people with disability/disabilities until it was abolished in 2007. Based on the DRC's statistics and the research conducted by Kosygina (2005), this research finds that anti-discrimination legislation at the central level, the Saudi Arabia Human Rights Act, does not contained any section which authorises enterprises and firms not subject to the Employment Equity Act to ensure and establish voluntary employment equity programmes. Contradicting this policy even further, according to Al-Turaiki's (2000) data analysis, there were 7 million individuals with disability/disabilities of working

age in Great Britain; however, according to Kosygina's (2005) data, the proportions of men and women receiving disability benefits in the UK are close to equal. At 7 million individuals with disability/disabilities of working age it can be argued that central affirmative action is not as effective in Saudi Arabia as it has been in other parts of the world.

The unemployment rates for people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia between 2003 and 2007 according to King (2005) has been at an average of 10% (considering averages for both genders and all regions). This can be compared with 21% for people without disability/disabilities. Breaking this list down further, the mentally ill had the lowest employment rate in all regions. Going by these statistics, there still a concern regarding the lack of employment in Saudi Arabia especially in connection with low educational qualifications inasmuch as policies such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Article 53 of the Labour and Workmen Law have been introduced.

-In addition to this, the data suggests that individuals with disability/disabilities are less than half as likely to have a university degree and twice as likely to have no higher qualifications when compared to individuals without disability/disabilities. Breaking these statistics into specific sectors, the research indicates that Saudi Arabia is showing improved signs in terms of creating jobs for people with disability/disabilities. This has been especially the case with the stabilisation of the political environment in most provinces. Accordingly, healthcare has topped the list of institutions offering employment to people with disability/disabilities with approximately 45% of the jobs for them being created in this sector in 2013 as compared to 38% in previous years. The main reason contributing to this increase is

the heavy government investment in the sector. According to the survey as discussed in Chapter Five, firms such as ones in the retail and telecommunications sectors competed for the second and third position respectively.

In summary, one clear policy that has pushed for the employment of people with disability/disabilities in the above-mentioned sectors is the inclusion of Article 51 of the Labour and Workmen Law of Saudi Arabia which states that a person with disabilities is any human being whose capacity and internal ability to perform and maintain a suitable job has actually been diminished as a result of any physical or mental infirmity to the same.

On the other hand, there is one significant research that has some connection with this section. This is the analysis made by Ahmed, Hundt and Blackburn (2011) while researching on *Issues of Gender, Reflexivity and Positionality in the Field of Disability* within the context of Arab Society. Beginning with the setting, as the researchers established, this study also finds that employees in Saudi Arabia mostly practice Islam with a very few cases of other religions such as Christianity. Therefore this study finds that higher positions are held mostly by Muslims and that the identity of the people who hold such positions is also influenced by culture as well as religion. Connecting this in instances of disability, it appears that no matter how educated the individual with disability/disabilities may be, if they are not Muslims, the chance that they will be considered for employment has been reported as low. Inasmuch as Article 51 of the Labour and Workmen Law of Saudi Arabia has tried to promote equal opportunities for non-Muslims with disability/disabilities, mainstreaming is still a challenge in most sectors.

According to statistics provided by Ahmed, Hundt, and Blackburn (2010), people with

disabilities constitute less than 1% of the total population in most areas of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia (Ahmed, Hundt, & Blackburn, 2011, based on the 2001 census as well as data from the Central Statistics Organisation, 2001). Therefore based on this data, this research finds that only 25% of the total population of people with disability/disabilities (1% of the total population) had been considered for employment in most sectors before 2011. This finding has also been supported by Ahmed, Hundt and Blackburn (2011) who realise that the idea of segregating non-Muslims with disability/disabilities discourages social independence as well as promoting the exclusion of people with disabilities. *The work of King (2005) also supports this finding as he realised that the idea of segregating non-Muslims with disability/disabilities discourages social independence as well as promoting the exclusion of people with disability/disabilities. Inclusion is an important component when addressing any problem associated with a community and society, and exclusion worsens the situation. The solution in addressing the problem is to encourage inclusion and redefine the structures in society to support inclusion in the numerous challenges which society and community create. This implies that collaboration and cooperation among different institutions should continue in order to improve the situation in relation to disabilities and general societal requirements.*

It is also important to bring out the issue of gender and the employment of individuals with disabilities as Ahmed, Hundt and Blackburn (2010) have extensively. As their study establishes, state education in Saudi Arabia is mostly free on the lower levels. Additionally, there are instances where people are segregated in terms of gender when it comes to classrooms and staffing. Equally, some provinces have established special education for individuals with disability but all these forms of education borrow largely from Western models and practices. Therefore boys and

girls who complete secondary levels are transferred by the government to specialised institutions where they receive further support. This has basically been discussed in Chapter Two of this research where it is explained that Article 27, legislated in 1992, provides a governmental guarantee for citizens of Saudi Arabia in cases of sickness, emergency, disability, or old age by ensuring social security and encouraging agencies and individuals to participate in charitable activities.

In the special institutions for the education of persons with disabilities, this study finds that such learners are segregated and only allowed to pursue humanity-related career studies, which ultimately limits their future employment opportunities.

According to Oliver (1992), institutions should be developed and structured in a manner that supports both individual and collectivist perspectives in accomplished defined roles and responsibilities. The role of special institutions for the education of persons with disabilities is to enable the learner to have the tools and techniques to function as persons without disabilities. It is a common saying that disability is not inability, but the Saudi Arabian concept exemplifies the view that disability is inability (Oliver, 1992). For example, requiring learners to concentrate on humanity-related career studies limits their capacities. It is imperative to note that persons with disability/disabilities can develop products and services that could improve their conditions because they can use their own experience as inspiration to achieve these aims. For instance, learning engineering would enable a person with a physical disability to create a product that would address the disability.

Ahmed, Hundt and Blackburn (2011) highlight a key issue that shapes the collection of data in any research which is the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer. It must be pointed out that with regard to data collection to seeking instances of employment segregation among women, this research came up with unconvincing data since Saudi Arabia is a conservative country where it is not easy

to freely interact with females if there is nothing concrete to bring about such relationships.

Consequently, this study finds that policy-makers for employment of women with disabilities have not been free to talk about gender issues since there are some religious and traditional cultural views (these cultures and religious beliefs have been captured in Chapter Two) on the characteristics of different genders and these shape relationships between men and women. Due to these limitations, this study finds that the position of women in terms of employment has not really been factored in. As Ahmed, Hundt and Blackburn (201a) found “Some issues related to gender were discussed, such as gender segregation and integration in education, whereas issues related to sexuality and marriage or even men talking about their position in the society were often not fully, freely or directly discussed” (p. 11).

This study finds similar trends. That is, there are limitations when it comes to developing or coming up with employment policies that will take care of women with disability/disabilities in society. To be specific, looking at policies such as Regulation of Rehabilitation Programme No. 1355 which was negotiated to establish a rehabilitation programme with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs only takes care of disabilities in men with little attention to women. This research also finds that these policies are not open enough to allow women with disability/disabilities to take some of the job on offer. For instance, inasmuch as Saudi Arabia has the Labour and Workmen Law which is supposed to take into consideration women with disability/disabilities when it comes to employment, this study recognises that Saudi women still do not have access to certain offices, venues or locations owing to cultural practices, or rather because gender issues have not

been dealt with in a satisfactory way, thus women with disability/disabilities have fewer opportunities when it comes to employment.

Still on the subject of the employment of women with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, schooling for women at all levels (elementary, secondary, high school and university) has been structured in such a manner that it remained under the Department of Religious Guidance until 2002. During this period women were mainly educated in a manner that it did not allow them to deviate from being servants of or rather good wives to their husbands, and people with disability/disabilities were not exempt from such curriculums. As a matter of information, the General Presidency for Girls' Education as a policy does not believe in preparing women for better jobs in future other than nursing and taking care of the home. While this trend has caused widespread public outcry and prompted a debate about the religious police's role, in such cases employment opportunities for women with disabilities have been few despite changes that have been reported in recent years.

Limitations of the Study/Research

The discussion, the literature review and all the requirements of this paper have been influenced by the amount of information available (Gustavsson et al., 2005). The current research concentrates on information from Western cultures and literature because of the extensive research associated with these regions. The limited amount of relevant information available limits the application of the theories and frameworks in the current research context. Numerous factors are associated with these limitations, the most evident being in relation to the cultural dimensions and dynamics.

Cultural dimensions can also result on limitations when research is being conducted and in relation to the relevant literature available. For example, the social spheres of males and

females in Saudi Arabian culture and by extension Muslim culture are clearly demarcated (Williams, 1999). Therefore, collecting information and finding participants in such a way as to fulfil the requirements of the research created numerous challenges, and the researcher had to navigate these challenges to accomplish the objectives of the research. For example, the cultural view of and position given to persons with disability/disabilities in society is often that they should be hidden, and some companies may even decide to pay employees to stay at home rather than have them to come to work if the individuals have any form of disability.

In any research, there are some components that have to be considered and determined in terms of their usefulness in helping to fulfil the requirements of a research (Oliver, 1992). Thus, the information and the recommendations included in the research should reflect the needs and requirements of the wider market or audiences. However, the collection of the data was based in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is similar to most Muslim countries in its unique culture and societal norms. Therefore, the information obtained from the research cannot be generalised. Generalisation is important, but it is also important that the reasons why the research cannot be generalised should be clearly identified and documented. It should also be noted that, the reason for the research and the motivation of the researcher were to understand and review the employment policy for people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, and this was accomplished accordingly. Therefore, the limitations regarding generalisability can be mediated by understanding that the research was targeted at the Saudi Arabia situation and context.

6.3 Conclusion

From the discussions above, it can be seen that there are a number of areas that still need review. First, this study needs to discuss the area of women and employment as reflected in Islamic teachings. In discussing Islamic teaching with

regard to the employment of women with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to differentiate between the diverse cultural practices and normative teachings among Muslims. One of the most common criticisms that Ahmed, Hundt and Blackburn (2011) also discuss is that Islam treats women unjustly.

However, as established by this study, Islamic teachings on the employment of women express respect for and recognition of women when it comes to employment. Additionally, going by research such as that of Labaree (2002), traditionally women have had prominent roles to play in nation building. Therefore, based on conclusions from the data found in the Seventh Development Plan (2001-2005) which has focused intensely on developing strict laws to formulate employment policies for persons with disability, it is worth noting that Saudi Arabia has taken big strides when it comes to the employment of women with disabilities. For instance, there are cases in Riyadh where women have reached political heights unparalleled in the most advanced Western nations. This study however acknowledges and supports studies such as that of Labaree (2002) which claim that there are cultural practices and customs that have denied women with disability/disabilities equality to an extent that they are now accepted as Islamic rules inasmuch as there are enactment of policies that negate these customs.

In summary, the data discussed in earlier stages of this study prove that policies developed help with disability/disabilities stand a better chance of employment, but the main problem is that the country still struggles with a highly selective and narrow interpretation of Islam. There have been statements from scholars such as Cassidy and Allanson (2001) that equality for women in particular is not guaranteed by religion.

These findings are not evidence-based and fall short of current engagement with Islamic religion in the country. If anything, Islamic as a religion believes in equality for all humanity regardless of race, tribe or physical attributes. The bone of contention in this debate comes back to the aspect of creating awareness among people close to or working with people with disabilities. Studies such as Gamera-Oosterom et al.'s (2012) have specifically pointed out issues such as isolation and non-inclusion in schools which could be an important issue - it is for the very same reason that one rarely sees people with disabilities working in a supermarket or shop. The argument could be that the construction of the buildings automatically discriminates against people with disabilities working here but much is yet to be done to investigate this area.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

According to Sterba (2001), socialism represents an expansive array of both ideologies and political movements aimed at establishing a socio-economic structure where property and wealth distribution are subjected to communal control. This means that for the full creation of wealth, the employment of people with disabilities is necessary. This chapter critically provides conclusion and recommendation based on issues and the data that has been analysed. This will be based on the thesis statement of the research.

7.2 Analysis of conclusions and recommendation

There is concern that, regardless of the dramatic increase in the employment of people with disability/disabilities and the wealth of policy reforms in Saudi Arabia over the last 20 years, that people with disability/disabilities remain significantly alienated if not disadvantaged in the quality and quantity of their participation in the labour force in most sectors of the economy. There is evidence, as explained in the literature review and discussion sections, that a steady improvement has taken place in the process of employing people with disability/disabilities, and considerable improvement has occurred in certain sectors such as public sector employment. In these sectors for instance the policies reviewed above have brought about improvement as well as creating the possibility of stronger legal challenges and giving more responsibility to employers to consider the employment of people with disability/disabilities.

However, this research recognises that there are still low levels of employment for people with intellectual impairment which remain a concern for this research. Conversely, inasmuch as this research recognises steady improvement with the

investment in welfare that promote recognition of the people with disability/disabilities, some of which have positively impacted on the employability of the people with disability/disabilities; there is also concern regarding the increasing expectations and demands on people with disability/disabilities, especially those from remote areas within Saudi Arabia.

Again, in connection with remote areas, this study finds that there are some more effective and better-established policies, some which have been found to be partially successful and to only function as a result of pressure from non-governmental organisations, that have succeeded in bringing people identified as having disability/disabilities who are close to labour or the market into what can be termed 'open employment.' However, this research concludes that an enduring task for the aforementioned policies and policy implementers is to bring people with disability/disabilities who are historically some distance from the labour market, closer to paid employment or opportunities.

Thus the research presented above shows employers' attitude towards the employability of people with disability/disabilities within Saudi Arabia. Based on the trends emerging from the data analysis and discussion, the research concludes that the employers' prevailing attitudes is that people with disability/disabilities can only thrive when given less demanding tasks and preferably humanity-related jobs. Inasmuch as this study recognises its limitations when it comes to the number of respondents considered in the literature reviewed thus far, this does not represent bias when interpreting the results.

In connection with this, the study draws the conclusion that employers still have negative attitudes to employing people with disability/disabilities despite the

above-mentioned policies. It can also be concluded that, despite the policies that have been introduced by the government, most employers still lack the needed ideas, knowledge, awareness and understanding of people with disability/disabilities when it comes to their rights to employment. Specifically addressing the issue of awareness, there is the need for this to be extended to the co-workers and employers of people with disability/disabilities especially. Specifically, this needs to start with mainstreaming or inclusions in schools which will make people more familiar and at ease when dealing with people with disability/disabilities. This will also increase the level of awareness.

This lack of awareness has significantly contributed to the ineffective integration of individuals with disabilities within the workforce -- especially in important sectors such as banking and the oil industry.

In addition, whilst findings as discussed shows that whilst Saudi Arabian policies and legislation have been compelling companies and possibly employers to meet given equity targets, this study concludes that meeting such targets has been a challenging tasks for these industries and employers as a result of their inability to access qualified and skilled individuals with disabilities. This research has briefly reviewed the issue that a large number of individuals with disabilities have not received high quality education.

While mentioning the lack of proper qualifications among the populations of people with disability/disabilities in Saudi Arabia, this study concludes that the policies reviewed thus far agitate for the welfare of the people with disability/disabilities but in so doing lack the needed specificities. That is, they overlook specific disabilities people are characterised with. In this regard, the nature of the work and

the type of disability have been of concern to most employers inasmuch as those policies ask them to consider how to employ people with disability/disabilities.

This is recognised as a major problem especially in attempts by these sectors to integrate people with disability/disabilities within specific sectors in the open labour market. Conversely, this research finds that there are instances of non-disclosure of disabilities that have been playing a big role when it comes to sticking to the policies regulating the employment of individuals in the country. Due to uncertainty about repercussions, most individuals, especially those of low economic status tend to conceal their physical status when seeking employment and only allow it to become apparent when they have secured their jobs. Therefore it emerges that these policies need to find clearer guidelines or strategies that employers should use in such instances.

The process of employing people with disability/disabilities as a process instigated by policy formulation needs to be noted as a process that has been hampered by trial, experimentation, and error. This study therefore concludes that policy makers regarding the employment of people with disability/disabilities have come to realise that formulating policies to govern the employment of people with disability/disabilities is not a long term solution to their unemployment. This is backed by the Minister for the Labour Market (currently Counsellor to the King) who stated that the labour market on a number of occasions has been constrained and is therefore not expected to fully support people with disability/disabilities. After all, according to the attitudes shown by the private sector towards the employment of people with disability/disabilities, these policies might not succeed if they ultimately jeopardise the economy and strength of the private sector.

Additionally, these policies fail to recognise the threat to national security and the social threat in relation to the complete overhauling of employment policies to factor in people with disability/disabilities. At the moment, Saudi Arabia is in a completely new era, not just in connection with employment patterns but also with issues such as the World Trade Agreement, human rights and women rights so that employers are already pressed to employ given standards so as to also cope with emerging trends in industry. This when considered can create an interplay between the willingness to employ people with disability/disabilities (as postulated by these policies) and the maintenance of a given standard of practice within a given sector.

As a result, inasmuch as there are health policies for people with disability/disabilities, employers are still restrained by such threats. It cannot be denied, in the wake of policies, laws, and increased awareness in most ministries that Saudi Arabia no longer understands the value of opening up her society and consequently embracing others. Here the study considers King Abdullah Ibn Abdul-Aziz's initiative towards interfaith dialogue a good example. It is therefore incorrect to conclude that the policies formulated to support people with disability/disabilities have not changed the minds of employers. In fact, it is worth noting that efforts and policies as those of King Abdullah Ibn Abdul-Aziz have created very clear objectives for the people with disability/disabilities and shown what is needed in terms of forceful logistics and continuous dialogue with potential employers.

This research notes that failure to implement policies suggested, or failure to consider employment of the people with disability/disabilities go against the objectives of the time of change the country is heading towards. If Saudi Arabia

weakens or distorts policies aimed at empowering people with disability/disabilities who for so long have not participated in nation building, then this study foresees that the country's strict Islamic ideologies will lead to it becoming isolated. In the light of the contributions made by people with disability/disabilities, weakening the policies will significantly contribute to the failure of the country to have a balance in its society which is already suffering from rigidity, xenophobia, and chronic nepotism.

This research also notices that these laws have already contributing to balancing the social mix by forcing some expatriates to quit the job market in Saudi Arabia, not because they could not perform their duties satisfactorily, but because they were denying people with disability/disabilities opportunities while their objective was to have a source of income rather than to work for the betterment of the country. Conversely, it has been noted, there are more unemployed Saudis with disability/disabilities than there are employed. This, according to this study is what ails Saudi society. Similarly, it can be concluded from the positive feedback received concerning people with disability/disabilities on the payroll, complaints in some sectors that people with disability/disabilities are unethical, unprofessional, lazy and under-qualified are only symptoms of a more general malaise.

A positive point to note from the study is the speed with which the country is improving its wealth status which can only emphasise the dilemma of continuing to purchasing development from the able rather than moulding both those with and without disability/disabilities. Beginning with education, this study has recognised that people with disability/disabilities are not given the best education, and the education which is given to them is in the humanities.

Therefore, the conclusion is that education policies are responsible for many features of Saudi society today. It is true that available policies have not done enough for the planning of education for people with disability/disabilities inasmuch as the situation that people with disability/disabilities find themselves in does not mean they are under-qualified. The practice of looking at the people with disability/disabilities as under-qualified has some connectedness with Islamic teachings. The conclusion that can be drawn is that Islamic teachings recognise the value of diligence, hard work, and carefulness, and that hard work will be rewarded. In this case this hard work can be related to the strenuous educational process people with disability/disabilities undergo, however the final reward is minimal.

Judging by the results obtained thus far regarding employment policies for people with disability/disabilities, it is evident that these policies, to some extent, have forced employers, particularly private sector employers to offer employment to people with disability/disabilities, not because they want to but so as to abide by the policy requirements, not because of the feeling that this is the right thing to do. Despite this, the number of those with disabilities employed does not reflect the targets set by these policies; therefore the quota targets have not been met either.

An employee with disability/disabilities can still be an important asset to any organisation regardless of whether or not these policies have forced employers to take them on. In this area, the allocation of opportunity or employment ought to be based on merit as well as economic need rather than the physical appearance of individuals. On the other hand, the researcher has come to realise that it is not a good idea to force employers to take in people with disability/disabilities when they do not need them. Coming up with these policies are just myopic, short-term

solutions for the people with disability/disabilities.

Despite these concerns as far as the formulation of policies guiding people with disability/disabilities in concerned, the organisations, companies and sectors who have engaged people with disability/disabilities have reported significant advantages in employing people with disability/disabilities. Thus this study concludes that people with disability/disabilities have positive attitudes and are easily trainable as well as having higher productivity levels compared to their counterparts.

In some cases, this study found that sectors and businesses scored equity points and registered a more competitive trend as well as having the opportunity to benefit from the work of and to learn from people with disability/disabilities. Still on the benefits of employing people with disability/disabilities, it is to be noted that the policies as formulated have created jobs for people with disability/disabilities and as a result organisations already have people with disability/disabilities in response to the updated policies whereby they are supposed to work towards a social model of disability.

This has been done by getting rid of or minimising barriers by means of reasonable accommodation and education programmes which according to this research have positively impacted on both the organisation and the future opportunities for integration for those with disability/disabilities. As indicated in this research, evidence is presented *albeit* limited, suggesting that due to the policies that have been established with regard to the employment of people with disabilities, organisations are now willing and in fact actively making attempts to reduce barriers that were once linked with the employment of people with disability/disabilities.

This move has been necessitated by the view that the attitudes of employers are of significant concern in relation to the employment of these very people, since successful employment can only be achieved when people with disability/disabilities are accepted as workers in the labour market.

As a recommendation from the study above, it is very essential for policy- and decision-makers to increase the level of awareness regarding the social problems linked to the employability of people with disabilities, and such awareness must be within the framework of the policies that guide such employment. In connection with this, these laws and policies are not designed for office holders but rather for people with disability/disabilities and employers. Therefore they should be very clear and easily understood by the employers and incentives should be considerable especially for the targeted employers who are tasked with the responsibility of employing such individuals.

On the other side, it is the responsibility of employers to consider that reasonable accommodation in the designated workplace should be included, even more so when hiring people with disabilities. This research recommends aspects such as altering the person's working hours, or allowing people with disabilities some authorised absences especially if they have to go for rehabilitation. In addition to the above recommendation, more effort is needed to support pathways which gradually lead to paid work. Indeed this study further advocates a gradual path into work with hours gradually being built up and voluntary work as forms of validated economic and social activity. Conversely, it needs to be made clear that inasmuch as employers must comply with these policies, the accepted productivity norms must not fall below 45 to 60% of the total expected outcome and the person with the

disability must be able to perform within these levels.

The third recommendation is that the issue of Western values have tended to create policies which are intended to help people with disability get employed which are not suitable for Saudis, particularly for people with disabilities. Just as the ideologies of conservatives have derailed women in the country, aspects of the maximum utilisation of the work force if applied strictly in Saudi industries may result in policies which it is not worth developing. In fact some Western ideologies are extreme which may cause major problems for the locals. To avoid this, Saudi policy makers for the employment of people with disabilities must team up with educationalist so that the Saudi education system and curriculum is able to implement different but unique strategies geared towards looking after people with disability/disabilities with which most employers disagree.

Looking at the micro level vis-à-vis employment of people with disabilities, there have been recent changes in the international arena which have subsequently opened the door for true, honest reflection as was never the case before. That is scholars and columnists now have the opportunity to criticise education, health, industrial and even legal systems that tend to perpetuate the unemployment of people with disabilities. Through these channels, the government or institutions responsible may learn to appreciate people with disabilities.

Future development plans and policies need to tackle problems with increased economic demands, the limitations in jobs for people with disabilities as well as those due to their being segregated. If the government needs to survive in the current globalised world then the employment of people with disabilities must be a priority. Unfortunately, owing to the apparent variation with regard to the

perspectives of employers who have been busily seeking to progress, as well as the attitudes of some of the more conservative religious scholars, coupled with traditions which work together to resist any moves forward with regard to the employment of people with disabilities, it is difficult to predict what the future holds for this group.

In relation to future research, this study suggests the need for research to be conducted which will successfully apply experience in human capital development; such an application be carried out through open debates and rethinking employment programmes for the Saudi Arabia's citizens with disabilities. A good example of this can be seen in a case study from Singapore where experience with government commitment and engagement in forums that educate employers must be taken into consideration. Another case study of a similar situation was carried out in Malaysia where at least 5% of all job opportunities are left open for people with disabilities, indicating that it is beneficial for a country if such a system is adopted. In Malaysia, there is a restructured and re-invented employment system; this has actually been modified three times within a period of 20 years with people with disabilities and the less fortunate in mind.

The Saudi Arabian Development Plans and policies for people with disabilities should be guided by these two and other successful examples. Another recommendation in line with this is to make media active engines, especially when it comes to building work ethics and an appreciation of people with disabilities.

The fourth recommendation is regarding the application of theories when reviewing the current policies and streamlining future policies. For example, the Saudi Arabian Development Plans have clear guidelines on assisting persons with disability/disabilities and creating an

environment that supports their requirements (Pfeiffer and Yoshida, 1995). However, the definition of any policy should be based on theories and policies which have been successfully applied. According to Williams (1999), policies cannot operate without precedent, and the precedent is used to craft the applicable policy. The policies should incorporate the current frameworks and integrate the views of current methodologies regarding supporting the requirements of persons with disability/disabilities (Pfeiffer and Yoshida, 1995). For example, creating legislation on equality at the workplace is an appropriate response, but ensuring the effective implementation of policy may be a challenge because the theories and frameworks in place do not integrate the changing requirements at the workplace. Therefore, integration of different theories and frameworks is important in ensuring policies reflect the needs of the interested parties.

The fifth recommendation is the basis of the policies and takes into consideration the perspectives of different stakeholders in ensuring the success of the policies and frameworks. In developing the policies, the needs and perspectives of different stakeholders should be reviewed (Watson, 2002). For example, employment and labour legislation should incorporate the views of the managers and owners of businesses (Pfeiffer and Yoshida, 1995). The government and institutions can develop policies but, without the contribution of the different stakeholders, it becomes difficult to fulfill the requirements of the policy (Barnes 1991). The stakeholders understand the requirements and can guide the formulation of any plan. Saudi Arabia has numerous stakeholders when it comes to developing policies. Thus organisations, persons with disability/disabilities, and the government are important stakeholders. The persons with disability/disabilities understand their respective requirements and urge the development of the policies (Pfeiffer and Yoshida, 1995). The organisations are affected because labour policies directly affect recruitment and human resource policies, while the government seeks an inclusion framework. Therefore, collecting and integrating the views of

these different stakeholders is important in enabling any strategic policy to be effective.

Lastly, the formulation of policies and frameworks is straightforward, however their implementation may become a challenge. The success of any policy is shown by the extent of its implementation. The implementation of policies should be according to definite timelines and milestones which should be integrated in the implementation process. The timelines and milestones are aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the policy (Pfeiffer and Yoshida, 1995). However, poor formulation of a policy may adversely affect its implementation. For example, the proposal of tax incentives for the organisations employing persons with disability/disabilities is motivation for the organisations to employ such persons (Barnes, 1990). However, it must be asked how many people have been employed because of this, and how many organisations have embraced the policy? The tax incentive policy, for example, lacks any clear definition of the tax incentives and explanation of the influence of the incentives on business operations. Moreover, some of the stakeholders may lack enough resources to actualise the policy. Effective allocation of resources is important to the success of any policy, but the current framework does not incorporate the area of resource allocation (Pfeiffer and Yoshida, 1995). Therefore, reviews should be carried out to take into account elements relating to the interests of different stakeholders which could result in improvement in the manner in which policies are implemented.

7.3 Conclusions

Based on the recommendations for the policies that have been highlighted in this study, the study has critically examined the process of employing people with disability/disabilities as a policy guide. Also considered is how to restructure the existing imbalances of the Saudi Labour Market with regard to the unemployed. It is therefore evident that the policies in Saudi Arabia have served as a quick fix to reduce the current cases of unemployment among people with disability/disabilities

in the country. In addition, the study emphasizes that policy makers have taken steps with regard to the employment of people with disabilities especially in private sectors to give an indication on how serious these policies are. However, these policies lack an overall strategy.

Methods that have been used to implement or enforce compliance with policies among employers including the recent unrealistic quota system which tries to ensure that employers consider taking on a given number of people with disability per region. Such measures may restrict productivity in some sectors. In fact, the ban on the employment of foreign expatriates so as to create jobs for people with disabilities only shows how far the pressure is on the government to deal with unemployment. In order for these policies to succeed and to ensure the smooth transition of people with disabilities into the job market, policy makers, employers and the private sector in general must be guided and encouraged to find ways of establishing a channel of communication with each other besides joining forums led by the Saudi government and representatives from employers. At the moment, targets for policies as set must be re-evaluated in the light of what has been happening to people with disabilities. After assessment, achievable or realistic goals should be set that can be met by employers; this should take place within a reasonable time period.

The social model of disability suggests that it is the environment rather than the impairment that disables people. In Saudi Arabia where a Muslim culture predominates, consistent with the tenets of Islam, society embraces the culture of inclusion. Consequently, people with disabilities are given due consideration in the job market. This is also consistent with the Islamic approach to the social model,

which advocates for the need to adapt the environment and surroundings to the needs of people according to their abilities or inabilities.

This research establishes that Saudi society significantly contributes to disabling people with disability/disabilities rather than their impairments. This implies that if workplace environments in Saudi Arabia were prepared to better serve their needs, then there would be more inclusion of persons with disability/disabilities in the labour market. Hence the social model should be applied appropriately in Saudi policy.

The key findings of the study are that people with disability/disabilities remain significantly alienated and disadvantaged in terms of the quality and quantity of work participation in both the public and the private sector. There are lower employment expectations in relation to employees with disability/disabilities which perpetuate perceptions of workers with disability/disabilities as being inferior, high-risk, and undesirable. These low expectations become reinforced by the disability and by ineffective policies.

The workplace environments and societal attributes contribute significantly to the inefficiency, underemployment, and unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities. This also indicates the need for 'supported employment.' Additionally, recruiters lack concern for the needs of the employees with disability/disabilities. The same level of indifference to the needs of these employees applies within the public sector. As further established, the government has no clear policy regarding employment of people with disabilities. This is expressed in the need for policies to clarify recruitment procedures for employees with disability/disabilities.

The discriminatory treatment of employees with disability/disabilities prevails in many aspects of employment in the public and private sectors. This implies that Saudi Arabia has been slow in implementing formal policies concerned with recruitment and employment of employees with disabilities. This further indicates a cause for concern for policymakers. The public sector institutions are also slow in implementing the policies; furthermore most organisations with disability policies in place do not formally monitoring the policies.

As has been established, recruitment, training and development, promotion, sickness or absence management, and redundancy or terminations are the dominant policies in most of the organisations. However, there are no monitoring practices for these policies in place, hence their inefficiency. It has been further established that, in spite of awareness of the formal policies concerned with the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities, these policies are ineffective as monitoring them is a problem.

An additional cause for concern is the issue of poor employer attitudes and workplace discrimination, which bar persons with disability/disabilities from obtaining better positions or jobs. Their cultural background conditions the perceptions of employers. Changing attitudes towards people with disabilities in society also conditions the perceptions of employers. As established, few of the persons with disability/disabilities in employment are in management and administrative positions, whilst some are in low skilled jobs.

The low expectations towards persons with disability/disabilities are a reaction to the disability itself as well as ineffective policies. Employees with disability/disabilities are therefore generally disregarded and underappreciated,

especially in competitive employment. Since the policymakers' views of talented employees with disability/disabilities is shaped by such bias, there are lower employment expectations towards employees with disability/disabilities, which perpetuate perceptions of workers with disability/disabilities as being inferior, high-risk, and undesirable.

Additionally, most organisations do not provide persons with disability/disabilities with the appropriate tools which will enable them to carry out their work as required, but they are given lower priority than able-bodied workers. This also indicates that the workplace environment contributes significantly to the disregard, underemployment, and unemployment of persons with disability/disabilities. Furthermore the findings suggest that few of the organisations agree that implementing changes to favour people with disability/disabilities in the organisations is easy.

The consideration of costs associated with employing people with disability/disabilities is also an issue. As has been established, some Saudi organisations fail to employ persons with disability/disabilities due to fears regarding additional costs associated with making adjustments to absorb them and that this will create an additional workload for HR staff management and require additional supervisory time. In fact, most organisations surveyed that had employed people with disabilities had not adjusted the workplace environment to accommodate the needs of employees with disability/disabilities. Most Saudi employers are therefore ill-prepared for individuals with disabilities and have not created an appropriate environment for them.

Consistent with this, there is also a general lack of awareness among the employers

concerning the needs of persons with disability/disabilities. Most organisations that eventually recruit persons with disability/disabilities do not structure the work environment to address their needs. They also do not provide the relevant job training that could improve the performance of such persons. This perpetuates the low productivity levels of individuals with disabilities which are less than those of able-bodied workers. Thus it can be seen that people with disabilities should be provided with proper training when they join the workforce.

Lack of experience in dealing with individuals with disabilities also contributes significantly to the low employment and productive levels among them. They also tend to be engaged in jobs which they are over-qualified for due to underemployment and lack of recognition of their abilities.

An additional reason for not employing people with disability is that they fail to submit job applications for positions in competitive firms. Employees with disability/disabilities also claim that they are satisfied with the recruitment process which implies that persons with disability/disabilities consider themselves to blame for their situations rather than society.

7.4 Recommendations

These conclusions imply that if workplace environments in Saudi Arabia are prepared in such a way as to serve the needs of people with disabilities, then greater inclusion of this group in the labour market would result. In turn, the social model should be applied appropriately in Saudi policy.

The Saudi government and organisations should apply the social model to determine the policies, ideas, and laws that are beneficial to the employment needs of persons with disability/disabilities. As Alaikum (2008) explains, the social model helps in

eliminating barriers and promoting consideration of the needs of people with disabilities or impairments in society. This would be an appropriate strategy for transforming Saudi employers' attitudes and conceptions regarding disability. Indeed this model has been found to be more effective than using a rehabilitation strategy or a medical cure (Alaikum, 2008). In line with the social model, several recommendations are suggested.

When it comes to the persons with disability/disabilities themselves, the social model recommends transforming their attitudes from one where they are in the habit of blaming themselves for their place in society to one where they fault society. The rationale for this is that it shifts the burden to society to change its attitude to the persons with disability/disabilities, rather than for the individuals to have to change. In the case of Saudi Arabia, this approach will empower individuals with disabilities and provide them with stimuli to apply themselves fully in the workplace.

As yet, the Saudi government has no clear policy regarding employment of people with disabilities. This is expressed in the need for policies to clarify recruitment procedures for employees with disability/disabilities.

A policy should also be in place that oversees the structuring of the work environment in such a way that it meets the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Rather than provide persons with disability/disabilities with job-related training that is similar to that provided to their able-bodied counterparts, organisations need to provide relevant job training that can help enhance the performance of employees with disabilities. Such a supported employment approach is essential. An example of this approach includes the provision of a job coach to train the person with

disability/disabilities for the job.

Employees with disability/disabilities should be assisted throughout the employment process as well as in relation to the environment in which they operate. In addition, more employment opportunities that match their abilities should be provided. As established, most of employees with disability/disabilities are engaged in jobs in which they are not qualified.

In order to assist the individuals with disabilities to secure good employment, the government should come up with a policy that makes it compulsory for organisations to employ people with disabilities. However, this may follow proscribed procedures which may still be to the disadvantage of people with disabilities. Additionally, policies should also be in place requiring the improvement of the overall environment and easy access.

The government should introduce a range of labour laws or regulations that encourage organisations to hire and retain persons with disability/disabilities. The existence of such policies is likely to make employers more aware of their social obligations towards such individuals. Through legislation and policies, the organisations should be compelled to have a certain percentage of employees with disabilities.

There is a need for an intensified creation of awareness among employers regarding the needs of employees with disability/disabilities. Increased awareness will lead to considerable behavioural change. Due to poor awareness, employees with disability/disabilities continue to be disregarded and underappreciated in competitive employment environments. Such awareness should also be targeted at ensuring that hiring people with disability/disabilities in the workplace becomes a

social responsibility in the community.

Overall, there is the need for policies that stress the importance of increasing knowledge regarding disability awareness, as this could help reinforce positive attitudes towards disability. This implies the need to create awareness among business organisations regarding the capabilities of individuals with disabilities so that employers will be more aware that disability is not inability and that employees with disabilities can perform just as well as any people without them. There is also a need to create awareness among organisations to adopt appropriate mechanisms for the recruitment and management of persons with disability/disabilities. Lastly, awareness must be transmitted to people with disabilities to support them to have more exposure in the labour market, as this will enable individuals to develop a positive attitude towards people with disabilities.

Organisations should also provide a supportive employment and assistive technology for employees with disability/disabilities. These strategies are vital, as they will increase the competence and performance levels of this group. Supported employment practices such as providing a job coach could contribute significantly to their competence levels. Even so, few organisations consider integrating such practices.

Overall, the mixed methods used in this research have allowed attention to be given to the challenges confronting the implementation of policies for persons with disabilities and provided a basis from which to reflect on some of the intrinsic challenges inhibiting the effective employment of persons with disabilities. Overall, the findings from the quantitative research validated the findings from the qualitative research, as similar results were obtained from both.

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9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Interview Consent Form

If you would like to take part, please read this form carefully, tick the boxes, and sign your name:

		Yes	No
1	I have been given an information sheet describing the study		
2	It has been explained to me how the information I give will be used		
3	I agree to talk to the researcher about my experiences		
4	I understand that I can leave at any time and do not have to answer questions I don't want to		
5	I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have received satisfactory answers		
6	I understand that I can refuse to take part in the study		
7	I understand I can withdraw from the study at any time		
8	I allow you to record the interview and use it only for the purpose of this research		
9	I give you permission for my words to be used in this research but understand that that my name will not be mentioned		
Name :		Signature:	
Date:			

9.2 Appendix 2: Information Sheet

The title of study: Employment policy for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia

Date:

Researcher: Daliah Alkhoul

Directors of the study: Duncan Mitchell (d.mitchell@mmu.ac.uk)

Sue Caton (s.caton@mmu.ac.uk)

Nigel Cox (n.cox@mmu.ac.uk)

You are being invited to be interviewed as part of a project about employment policy for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The researcher will be surveying and interviewing people with disabilities in the work force to find out if the policies put in place by the Saudi Ministry of Labour regarding the employment of people with disabilities is being applied, how aware the organisation you work for is of these policies, and what support you receive from the organisations you work for.

You have been asked to take part in this interview following on from the questionnaire you have completed on Disability and Employment. The interview will be about your experiences as an employee with a disability, the policy that is used in your organisation to help employees with disabilities, the support and services that you receive from the organisation you are working in, what you think about the policy, support, and service, and your opinions on how to help them improve.

Before you decide if you want to take part in the interview it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and, if you wish, discuss it with the researcher. Ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take

part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form although you are still free to withdraw at any time.

If you decide to take part, the interview will last between 30 and 60 minutes. If you agree your comments will be recorded and used in the research. The information you give during the interview will be kept anonymous and no one will be able to identify you from your answers. If you are a male, please choose a third party from your side to join us during the interview since I am a Muslim female researcher.

All information we collect from you will be stored securely and will be destroyed at the end of the project. If you feel uncomfortable or distressed at any point during the interview you may leave and withdraw with no explanation needed.

You may not benefit directly from this evaluation. However, we hope that what we find out from this research will help increase the awareness of the policies and services available for people with disabilities in Saudi Arabia by having others learn from your experiences and from listening to your story; you may also give suggestions that may help improve the policies and services provided, and suggest further services that could be established.

For more information feel free to contact me:

Daliah Alkhoul

Email: dalia_alkhouli@hotmail.com

PhD student (Health and Social Care), Manchester Metropolitan University

9.3 Appendix 3: Questionnaire on Disability and Employment - Employers' Perspective

The purpose of this study and questionnaire is to provide information on the experiences of employers and potential employers of people with disability/disabilities.

It should be completed either by an HR department specialist or a line manager with responsibility for 5 or more staff members.

Completion of this questionnaire is entirely voluntary. Please feel free to leave out any questions you would rather not answer and also to use extra pages if you need more space. All information will be stored and used anonymously.

Please provide contact information that could be used to contact you for further research (optional):

Name:

Phone number:

Mobile:

Email address:

Fax:

Thank you for your cooperation

9.4 Appendix 4: Questionnaire on Disability and Employment - Employees' Perspective

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this disability research (Employment Policy for People with Disabilities in Saudi Arabia). The opinions and experiences of staff with disability/disabilities are critical to the development of the research.

The purpose of this study and questionnaire is to provide information on the experiences of employees with disabilities.

This questionnaire is completely anonymous. Information such as type of organisation is for statistical purposes only, and will not be used to identify you. Feel free to leave out any questions you do not feel comfortable answering, but this information might be useful to us for statistical purposes. It will not be used to attempt to identify you. All information provided is strictly confidential, and individuals will not be identified in any reports. Information will be used only for the research.

1. What is the nature of your disability?

2. Which age group do you fall under?

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 +

1. Is your organisation governmental or private?

2. What is your job title?

3. How long have you been working in your organisation?

0-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

15-20 years

20+ years

1. How were you first recruited, or how did you hear about the job?

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the recruitment process?

3. What do you think could be done to improve the recruitment process for applicants with disability/disabilities?

4. Thinking back to when you were recruited, did you declare your disability at or before interview?

5. When you started work, were reasonable adjustments made (e.g. specialist IT equipment, hearing (induction) loop, physical change to desk, new chair)?

6. If not, what reason was given for none being made?

7. Are there adjustments that you know of which would make your job easier?

8. Have you had any job-related training?

9. Do you feel you get the support you need from your line manager?

10. What general areas need improvement in your work place?

11. What general areas need improvement in the recruitment of individuals with disabilities?
12. What do you feel has been the biggest barrier in your experience in the workforce?
13. What do you think has been the most positive aspect of it?
14. Are there any other comments you want to make?
15. Are you willing to be interviewed, knowing that the interview will be about employees with disabilities, their recruitment, policies relating to them and their work environment?
 - o Yes
 - o No

If you answered “yes”, please provide contact details

Name:

Contact number:

Thank you for your cooperation.

Best regards.