How Deaf People Live: Gender, Poverty and Employment Opportunities?

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Abstract

The concept of gender equality and disability long been advocated, emphasizing equal rights and equality between human beings. However, in reality, gender, disability and poverty persists as intersecting factors that contribute to discrimination against the deaf. There are stigmatising assumptions that encourage unequal treatment of the deaf. This study aims to analyse the interrelated experiences of the deaf based on gender, poverty and employment opportunities in East Java. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews with 29 informants, documentation and focus group discussions (FGDs). The data were analysed using the NVivo 12 software, following a series of steps: data input, coding, exploration, visualization, and presentation. The results of the study challenge the gender disability theory which suggests that women with disabilities tend to be poorer than men with disabilities. Instead, this study found that both men and women with disabilities face similar levels of poverty and encounter difficulties in accessing labour market. Some of them are poor from birth, making it difficult to get education costs and making it difficult to find work. There are also those who have difficulty getting work because they are deaf, so they lack income to meet their needs. In addition, the result supports the existence of disability-poverty cycle among the deaf. Poverty for the deaf is exacerbated by their disability, lack of health insurance, limited access to education and skills training, and difficulties in penetrating the labour market.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, deaf women, job opportunities.

Abstrak

Konsep kesetaraan gender dan disabilitas sudah disuarakan dengan persamaan hak dan kesetaraan antara sesama manusia. Tetapi kenyataanya masih ada gender, disabilitas dan kemiskinan yang mewujudkan inetrseksionalitas dan diskriminasi terhadap kelompok tunarungu. Adanya asumsi stigma yang mendorong perlakukan tidak setara terhadap tunarungu. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk menganalisis keterkaitan pengalaman kelompok tunarungu berdasarkan gender, kemiskinan dan peluang kerja di Jawa Timur. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data mengguanakan observasi, wawancara dengan 29 informan, dokumentasi dan FGD. Analisi data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan program NVivo 12. Adapun langkah-langkahnya meliputi: input data, coding, eksplorasi, visualisasi dan penyajian data. Hasil penelitian ini menolak teori disabilitas gender bahwa perempuan disabilitas cenderung lebih miskin dari pada laki-laki disabilitas, namun penelitian ini menemukan bahwa baik laki-laki maupun perempuan disabiltisa sama-sama mengalami kemiskinan dan sulit mendapatkan akses di pasar kerja. Mereka ada yang miskin dari lahir sehingga sulit mendapat biaya pendidikan dan menyebabkan sulit mencari pekerjaan. Ada juga yang kesulitan masuk kerja karena tunarungu, sehingga kekurangan pendapatan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan. Selain itu penelitian ini juga mendukung terjadinya siklus kemiskinan disabilitas yang terjadi pada tunarungu. Kemiskinan yang terjadi pada tunarungu diperparah dengan kondisi disabilitas, jaminan kesehatan, kurangnya akese pendidikan dan pelatihan skill, serta sulitnya menembus pasar kerja.

Kata Kunci: *Diskriminasi gender, perempuan tunarungu, peluang Kerja..*

Introduction

Deaf people in many areas are isolated and forced into poverty due to their circumstance. They are marginalised in nearly every social aspect due to disability, gender and poverty which create intersectionality and discrimination against deaf people. Feminist discussions addressing issues such as body image and physical perfection, particularly when intersecting with disability, are rarely explored. The discrimination further exacerbates their struggles, making it difficult for deaf people to access decent job opportunities and fulfil their needs. [1] Despite the significant challenges experienced by deaf people, there were lack of research addressing this issues in Indonesia. Hence, there were few of references or studies which provide statistical data about the deaf. This study aims to analyse the interrelated experiences of the deaf based on gender, poverty and employment opportunities in East Java.

The relationship between gender and disability in feminist disability studies suggests that women with disabilities tend to be poorer than men with disabilities. [2] The relationship between poverty and disability was once conveyed by Humphrey that the cycle of disability poverty occurs because poverty causes disability and disability causes poverty. [3] The cycle of disability poverty can be broken by providing equal rights in education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. However, people with disabilities around the world still experience double discrimination based on gender and disability. In Indonesia, there are more children with disabilities living in poor households than children without disabilities. Data from the 2021 National Socioeconomic Survey (Susenas) shows that 17 percent of children with disabilities live in monetary poverty, and their chances of falling into poverty are 1.4 times greater than children without disabilities. [4]

This research was conducted based on the experience from a group of deaf people who actively attended a deaf association held every two weeks. During these meetings, they listen to religious lectures, socialise with fellow members and the surrounding community. One of the attendees shared their story, stating

"I never look for a job, because it is difficult for deaf people to get a job."

I just wait for people to give me any job.' Additionally, there was another story from three deaf people whose news went viral on social media. They were 'NK' a 33-year-old who is married with 2 children, 'DR' aged 29 and 'ST' aged 22. They work as informal traffic controllers at intersections, even though they are not police officers. Their deafness makes this job highly risk to their safety, yet they continue with determination to survive and fulfil their daily needs. This job is currently the only option available to them due to the difficulties to find job with their disabilities.

Research by Bell & Klein's, highlights the discrimination faced by the deaf in the workplace, where they often treated poorly by both employers and their co-workers due to their disability. [5] Studies in developing countries further reveal that deaf people earn lower incomes, struggle to make ends meet, are unable to afford unexpected expenses and face difficulties in employment. [6] Despite being caught in the cycle of poverty, many

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[1] Jesper Dammeyer and others, 'Work and Employment Characteristics of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Adults', *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 24.4 (2019), 386–95 <https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/enz018>.

[2] GIZ and Stefanie Ziegler, *Gender and Disability in International Cooperation* (München: Stefanie Ziegler Handicap International, 2014).

[3] Megan Humphrey, 'The Intersectionality Of Poverty, Disability, And Gender As A Framework To Understand Violence Against Women With Disabilities: A Case Study Of South Africa' (Clark University, 2016).

[4] Akhmadi and others, *Memberdayakan Setiap Anak Merangkul Keanekaragaman Dan Inklusi Untuk Semua: Analisis Lanskap Tentang Anak Penyandang Disabilitas Di Indonesia* (Indonesia: UNICEF, 2021).

[5] Bradford S. Bell and Katherine J. Klein, 'Effects of Disability, Gender, and Job Level on Ratings of Job Applicants', *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 46.3 (2001), 229–46 <https://doi.org/10.1037/0090-5550.46.3.229>.

[6] Eun Jung Kim, Bronagh Byrne, and Susan L. Parish, 'Deaf People and Economic Well-Being: Findings from the Life Opportunities Survey', *Disability and Society*,

deaf people continue to persevere and survive in a marginalised environment. The lack of job opportunities is partly due to the lack of information on job vacancies. [7] In developing countries, the deaf tend to have limited work-related skills. In addition, jobs designed for the deaf are sometimes taken by non-disabled individuals, further limiting opportunities. As a result, any deaf individuals rely heavily on community donations and government assistance, reinforcing societal stereotypes that the deaf are incapable of performing work.

Previous research has predominantly focused on the experiences of deaf people in the context of women and sexual violence. Deaf studies have been widely explored in other developed countries, but research on deafness in Indonesia is rarely highlighted. Research in Indonesia tends to focus on inclusive education or Special Education Schools, and the influence of family and social life on deaf people. [8] Research on disability, gender and economy, such as Maroto et al., highlights that low-educated disabled women experience the highest levels of poverty. [9] Similarly, Crowe's explores domestic violence experienced by deaf people due to arguments caused by the inability to fulfil household needs. [10]

This study builds on the recommendations of previous studies on poverty, gender and discrimination in employment opportunities. The distinctiveness of this study lies in its focus on the unique regional and cultural characteristics of Indonesian society, which differ significantly to the contexts previously analyzed in Arabia, [11] South Africa [12] and India. [13] Additionally, this research examines the intersectionality of poverty, gender, and employment opportunities for deaf individuals, focusing on how the intersections of gender and poverty exacerbate the challenges they face in accessing employment.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its focus on examining employment opportunities that intersect with dimensions of gender and poverty, exploring whether each factor independently, or both factors exacerbate the lives of deaf people. Deaf people are often subjected to stereotypes that portray them as incompetent and intellectually inferior. Discrimination in employment opportunities arises through distinctions or exclusions based on disability, gender, and poverty, all of which negatively impact the lives of deaf individuals. Research shows that employers often rely on such stereotype during the recruitment process and within workplace. Even within feminist studies, gender disability has not been highlighted as an aspect that suppresses systems of overlapping oppression. Women with disabilities have a harder time finding work than men with disabilities, although they generally face harder challenges in finding work. Deaf women, in particular, are often identified as being more impoverished and trapped in cycles of hardship.

33.3 (2018), 374–91 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1420631>.

[7] Tshegofatso Senne, 'Deaf Women ' s Lived Experiences of Their Constitutional Rights in South Africa Deaf Women ' s Lived Experiences of Their Constitutional Rights in South Africa', 0950.November (2017).

[8] Cara L Wong and others, 'Of Hearing and Their Parents : A Preliminary Investigation', *Am Ann Deaf*, 162.5 (2019), 463–78 <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2018.0004.Exploring>.

[9] Michelle Maroto, David Pettinicchio, and Andrew C. Patterson, 'Hierarchies of Categorical Disadvantage: Economic Insecurity at the Intersection of Disability, Gender, and Race', *Gender and Society*, 33.1 (2019), 64–93 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243218794648>.

[10] Teresa Crowe, 'Domestic Violence Services for the Deaf Community.', *Journal of* the *American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association*, 49.2 (2015), 102–19.

[11] Sahar Al-Makhamreh, 'Hearing the Voices of Young Deaf People: Implications for Social Work Practice in Jordan', *International Social Work*, 59.1 (2016), 47–59 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872813499057>.

[12] Michael Adu Okyere and Boqiang Lin, 'Invisible among the Vulnerable: A Nuanced Perspective of Energy Poverty at the Intersection of Gender and Disability in South Africa', *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10.1 (2023), 1–14 <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01604-2>.

[13] Michele Friedner, 'Deaf Uplines and Downlines: Multi-Level Marketing and Disharmonious Sociality in Urban India', *Contributions to* Indian *Sociology*, 49.1 (2015), 1–25 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0069966714558538>.

This research investigates the interplay between gender, poverty and employment opportunities, examining how these factors are further complicated by deafness. It adopts gender disability theory and intersectional poverty theory, to investigate the barriers to employment opportunities for the deaf community, which ultimately worsen the poverty.

Methods

This research used qualitative approach with a case study method, aimed at examining the intersecting factors of poverty, gender, and labour discrimination as well as challenges faced by deaf people in East Java. The research location was chosen due to the presence of a unique deaf community with strong solidarity. This deaf community was led by Mr 'ST'. It holds meeting every 2 weeks. Initially, the gathering is for religious discussions on acceptance of physical disability and gratitude for life. Over time, economic factors have also become a significant motivator for these gatherings, reflecting the financial challenges faced by this community. The limitation of this research is that it only takes informants who follow deaf groups in East Java. Data collection methods included observation, interviews, documentation and focus group discussions (FGDs). Observations were conducted to capture the daily life of the deaf community. Interviews were then held with selected informants, including 14 deaf women and 13 deaf men who regularly attend the meetings, as well as key informants Mr 'ST' and Mrs 'NV' who lead the community and are knowledgeable about the lives of deaf individuals in the area. Deaf informants interviewed with the criteria of deaf speech and hard of hearing. The sampling technique used purposive sampling. The results of observations and interviews will be triangulated. Final data validation was conducted through FGDs to verify and deepen insights where necessary.

Interviews were conducted with Mr 'ST' and Mrs 'NV' and the members of deaf community, with the assistance of sign language interpreter.

This research has been approved by the informants, but in order to maintain the confidentiality of the informants we use initials in the reporting.The interview instrument covered various factors causing deaf poverty including education, occupation, income, responsibility for the family and how to fulfil life. The study further investigates how poverty is influenced by gender, age, and marital status, with these factors impacting the employment opportunities available to deaf people. The most dominant aspects of employment influence the lives of deaf people seen from demographic aspects include barriers to finding work, job opportunities, employment discrimination, treatment of co-workers and work environment conditions. The research employed triangulation techniques to verify data sources ensuring credibility and accountability of the findings. Data analysis in this study used the NVivo 12 program. The steps include: data input, coding, exploration, visualisation and data presentation.

Results and Discussion
Gender Disability and Deaf Employment Opportunities

The data analysis flowchart generated from NVivo illustrates the relationship between gender and poverty on employment opportunities, segmented into three sections based on the generation of the informants: generation Z, Millennials and generation X. The classification was adopted due to the differing characteristics of each generation in job selection preferences. Additionally, the study explores gender and poverty conditions among the informants to highlight poverty differences between deaf men and women.

Initially, the study examined the relationship between gender and poverty on employment opportunities. However, findings indicate that both men and women faced similar challenges in

finding decent work. [14] Gender differences are apparent only in the types of jobs each gender typically undertakes. Of the 27 deaf informants, 93 % work in the informal sector and 89 % earn below the regional minimum wage. Deaf people face significant challenges in being accepted in a workplace due to their condition of deafness which leading to economic instability and causes a cycle of poverty within the deaf community. The results of this study are supported by research by Hella Citra and Febria Sri Artika stating that people with disabilities have a greater chance of experiencing the risk of poverty than those without disabilities, while gender status does not affect poverty.[15]

The results of data visualisation in this study are as follows.

Table 1. Generation Z - Gender and Employment Opportunities on Poverty

Female			
Graduate	**Work**	**Income**	**Hearing Condition**
SMA-SLB B	*Ironer*	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Chef	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Employee	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Selling crackers	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Tailor	*Below the UMR*	*Deaf*
	Online shop	*Below the UMR*	*Deaf*
SMP-SLB B	*Waitress*	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*
Male			
SMA-SLB B	*Unemployment*	*No income*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Informal traffic controller	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*

Source: Research Data, 2024

Generation Z faces great challenges in the entry-level job market and early career stages. The Deaf in Generation Z struggle to compete with non-deaf people, because the variety of jobs requires information technology and communication skills. Table 1 illustrates that their employment consists mostly of flexible, non-permanent job, such as online shop, laundry services, tailoring, selling snacks, working in stalls and informal traffic controller (suplantas or cepek police). Employment opportunities for deaf men are limited to manual labour, while deaf women prefer domestic work, online shop, tailoring, working in stalls and selling. Additionally, Generation Z also choose not to work when they are married.

In general, Generation Z men and women are highly vulnerable to poverty. Part of the deaf community in Generation Z feels inferior to compete with others, resulting in a lack of motivation to look for work. Instead, they rely on informal, low-wage jobs provided by community members, often earning below the regional minimum wage (UMR). Their average income is not sufficient to meet basic living standard. Some of them are also still rely on family financial support. Generation Z's lack of skills and difficulty in communicating create an obstacle to being able to compete for job opportunities. Access to formal training and education for the deaf remains minimal, which further restricting the skills they need for employment.

In this study, the gender and employment opportunities on poverty for Generation Z and Millennials are quite similar. Table 2 provides an overview of the employment patterns and poverty challenges faced by the deaf Millennial community.

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[14] Alia Harumdani Widjaja, Winda Wijayanti, and Rizkisyabana Yulistyaputri, 'Perlindungan Hak Penyandang Disabilitas Dalam Memperoleh Pekerjaan Dan Penghidupan Yang Layak Bagi Kemanusiaan', *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 17.1 (2020), 197 <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1719>.

[15] Hella Citra and Febria Sartika, 'Determinants of NEET in Matrilineal Province of West Sumatra During the Covid-19 Pandemic', *HUMANISMA : Journal of Gender Studies*, 6.2 (2022), 196 <https://doi.org/10.30983/humanisme.v6i2.5928>.

Table 2. Millennial Generation - Gender and Employment Opportunities on Poverty

Female			
Graduate	Work	Income	Hearing Condition
SMA-SLB B	*Waitress*	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Unemployment	*No income*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Housewife	*No income*	*Deaf*
SMP-SLB B	*Online shop*	*Below the UMR*	*Deaf*
Male			
SMA-SLB B	*Shopkeeper*	*Below the UMR*	*Hard of Hearing*
	Informal traffic controller	*Below the UMR*	*Deaf*

Source: Research Data, 2024

The millennial generation shows more stable economy than generation Z, who are still in early stages of career development. In general, deaf income is still below the regional minimum wage. Job roles for deaf Millennials do not differ significantly from those available to Generation Z. They choose the type of work that can be done by the deaf such as cooking, shop keeping, or managing online shop. Some of the jobs are high-risk for the deaf, such as being suplantas or informal traffic control, which yields the highest income among the options available to them.

Generation X, often referred to as the hardworking generation, generally aims for stable jobs to support family life. Among generation X, both deaf and non-deaf, share common characteristics related to employment preferences. Table 3 shows the relationship between gender and employment opportunities to poverty in generation X.

Table 3. Generation X - Gender and Employment Opportunities on Poverty

Gender	Female	Male	
Graduate	*SMA-SLB B*	*SMA-SLB B*	*SMP-SLB B*
Work	*Tailor*	*Tailor*	*Newspaper Delivery*
Income	*Below the UMR*	*Below the UMR*	*Below the UMR*
Hearing Condition	*Hard of Hearing*	*Deaf*	*Deaf*

Source: Research Data, 2024

Generation X is the most economically stable compared to Generation Z and Millennials. There is little much variation in employment, including jobs like tailoring and newspaper delivery. Both men and women tend to earn less than the minimum wage. The relationship between gender, employment opportunities and poverty in each generation shows that there are slight differences in access to employment. Both men and women experience difficulties in finding work. The education levels of both genders are typically range from junior secondary to senior secondary school. All the informants attended special schools which have different characteristics from formal schools. Thus, the opportunity to pursue further formal education or work is very limited. Studies have shown that deaf people who attend formal schools are more adaptable in the world of work. [16] However, deaf people also have difficulty accessing higher education and additional skills training which can increase competitiveness in the labour market.

There are preferences differences in the types of jobs between men and women. Men tend to choose menial jobs that are more physically demanding, while women prefer household-related jobs that can be done from home such as running an online shop or sewing. This is influenced by the deaf people usually being offered jobs by the surrounding community. The difference in jobs between deaf men and women is influenced by the stigma of society that men tend to work hard because they have a stronger physique. While women are more adept at working in the household sector. In both generations Z and X, some of them have been working in online shop although not yet maximised. In Generation Z and X, online work has started to become popular, though these ventures are still on a small scale and have not yet generated significant income. In general, both deaf men and women

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[16] Renée Punch, 'Employment and Adults Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Current Status and Experiences of Barriers, Accommodations, and Stress in the Workplace', *American Annals of the Deaf*, 161.3 (2016), 384–97 <https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2016.0028>.

experience similar challenges in terms of employment opportunities and poverty risks, although their job choices reflect gender-specific patterns.

In poverty, women are often more severely affected, bearing a heavier burden, and making their survival more precarious. [17] This phenomenon is referred to as the 'feminisation of poverty'. Factors such as poverty and disability often exacerbate these difficulties, and women with disabilities, in particular, are more likely to face significant challenges due to gendered societal structures. Disability theory and feminist structural interpretations have only been able to explain the link between gender, disability, and experiences of domestic violence, but have not fully addressed how social and economic structures contribute to these challenges. [18] There is a need to combine structural feminist interpretation (material feminism) and disability theory in studying gender disability. [19]

Disability theory, which follows the principle of social model, does not adequately explain the gendered nature of disability. [20] The difficulty with the social model is that it tends to exclude the implications of gender in the lives of people with disabilities. This male-centred perspectives restricts understanding of how disability is influenced and shaped by other dimensions, such as gender. A feminist material perspective draws connections between historical, social and economic factors, which support and institutionalise a patriarchal society that privileges male power over women. The interconnectedness between different forms of disability oppression provides insight into how people with disabilities are marginalised and struggle to find employment.

Disability feminists argue that feminist interpretations provide valuable insights into the gender dimensions of disability. The importance of using such an approach in relation to disability, however, emphasizes the need to incorporate a disability dimension to provide a more comprehensive explanation. A deeper understanding of disability must also consider the ethical, psychological and epistemic challenges of living with disability. [21]

Research related to deafness often defines it as part of a linguistic minority community. [22] But it is also commonly categorised as a disability. This research, however, rejecting the concept of gender disability which suggests that disabled women tend to be poorer than disabled men. This theory is based on the belief that women face economic instability due to overlapping gender and disability stereotypes. Society tends to perceive women as less capable in the workplace because of these stereotypes, leading to reduced access to the labor market. [23] This study reveals that both men and women with disabilities are equally poor. Nonetheless, it suggests that disability is the

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[17] Nilika Mehrotra, *Disability, Gender And Caste Intersections In* Indian *Economy*, *Social Science and Disability*, 2016, XXXIV.

[18] Pamela Luft, 'Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners With Intellectual Disabilities: Current Understandings and Remaining Challenges', *Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners with Disabilities: Foundations, Strategies, and Resources*, January, 2022, 133–61 <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003252054-5>.

[19] Kharnita Mohamed and Tamara Shefer, 'Gendering Disability and Disabling Gender: Critical Reflections on Intersections of Gender and Disability', *Agenda*, 29.2 (2015), 2–13 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2015.1055878>.

[20] Vandana Chaudhry, 'Living at the Edge: Disability, Gender, and Neoliberal Debtscapes of Microfinance in India', *Affilia - Journal of Women and Social Work*, 31.2 (2016), 177–91 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109915622525>.

[21] Carol Thomas, 'Disability and Gender: Reflections on Theory and Research', *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 8.2–3 (2006), 177–85 <https://doi.org/10.1080/15017410600731368>.

[22] Michael Higgins and Amy M Lieberman, 'Deaf Students as a Linguistic and Cultural Minority: Shifting Perspectives and Implications for Teaching and Learning', *Journal of Education*, 196.1 (2016), 9–18 <https://doi.org/10.1177/002205741619600103>.

[23] Sylvia Olsson, Munir Dag, and Christian Kullberg, 'Hard of Hearing Adults' Interpersonal Interactions and Relationships in Daily Life', *Disabilities*, 1.2 (2021), 71–88 <https://doi.org/10.3390/disabilities1020007>.

dominant factor contributing to poverty, rather than gender.

The main goal of providing employment opportunities to deaf people is to achieve financial independence which plays an important role in their well-being and quality of life.[24] However, deaf people also face various barriers that impact their employment opportunities.[25] Stigma is a major obstacle to employment for deaf people as employers are less likely to hire individuals with negative perceptions associated with deafness.[26] The biggest barrier to employing deaf people is the level of social acceptance or stigma that affects how employers perceive deaf people as potential workers.

Deaf people are perceived as having highly discredited attributes, and deafness is a master status that overrides all other character traits such as ability or personality.[27] Negative stereotypes, such as dependency, lack of understanding, hypersensitivity, inability to communicate, and rigidity in adjusting to life, contribute to biased attitudes and discriminatory behavior from employers.[28] Furthermore, many jobs require a high level of spoken language skills, whereas deaf people can only speak sign language.

Deaf poverty is caused by limited access to facilities and economic opportunities. In developing countries, work environments, education systems and social services are still not designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. They are not designed inclusively, which limits the opportunities for both disabled men and women to access the same opportunities as those without disabilities.[29] For example, public transportation and workplaces are not equipped with appropriate physical accessibility, limiting the movement and active participation of deaf people. This complicates their efforts to improve their living standards and opportunities to escape poverty. In the end, they become dependent on social assistance, which cannot fulfil all their needs.

Disability stigma serves as a barrier, which causes men and women to face similar financial problems. Deaf people are often perceived as less productive or unable to contribute economically. This stigma leads to a lack of job acceptance for people with disabilities, regardless of gender. Discrimination, both implicit and explicit, during the hiring process often leads to the exclusion of deaf individuals from employment opportunities. For example, job advertisements usually require applicants to be physically and mentally fit and able to communicate well, which disadvantages deaf applicants. This was experienced by GL: "I once applied for a job at a shop, but because I was deaf I was rejected."

The issue of poverty faced by deaf people is often linked to limited education and job training opportunities.[30] Education is essential to improving lives, but deaf people often do not have sufficient access to high-quality education. Both deaf men and women face challenges in obtaining formal education, primarily due to the lack of inclusive education facilities, community stereotypes about deafness, and lack of support from families. As a result, many deaf people are

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[24] Elisabeth Vigrestad Svinndal, Chris Jensen, and Marit By Rise, 'Employees with Hearing Impairment. A Qualitative Study Exploring Managers' Experiences', *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 42.13 (2020), 1855–62 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2018.1541101>.

[25] Robin E Perkins-Dock and others, 'A Survey of Barriers to Employment for Individuals Who Are Deaf.: Descubridor de La Universidad Anáhuac', *JADARA*, 49.2 (2015), 1–20.

[26] Cassandra Lempka, 'Employees Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Perceptions of Workplace Accommodations', *Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of* Northern *Colorado*, 5.2 (2019), 1–14.

[27] Laura Mauldin and Tara Fannon, 'They Told Me My Name: Developing a Deaf Identity', *Symbolic Interaction*, 44.3 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.482>.

[28] Virginia G. Lott and others, 'Work Attitudes of Students Who Are Deaf and Their Potential Employers', *Jadara*, 34.2 (2019), 31–55.

[29] Karen Nakamura, 'Deafness, Ethnicity, and Minority Politics in Modern Malaysia', *Crossroads of Diversity in Southeast Asia* Article, 12.20 (2002), 193–202.

[30] Hastuti and others, Kendala *Mewujudkan Pembangunan Inklusif*, ed. by Jakarta (The SMERU Research Institute, 2020).

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not equipped with the competencies needed to compete in the labour market.

Although Indonesia has an inclusive school policy, its implementation faces several challenges both internally and externally.[31] Internally, schools struggle with inadequate teacher resources, especially special education teachers, curriculum, and learning media which are difficult to adjust to the condition of deaf students. Externally, deaf students in formal schools. In addition, some parents and students reject the inclusion of deaf individuals in formal schools. This rejection may take the form of exclusion or humiliation of deaf students.

Regardless of gender, the main cause of poverty is the inequity of the economic system and inadequate disability policies. Only few community empowerment programmes address the economic needs of deaf people. For example, the lack of training programmes for deaf people. AG said that: "I have never attended any job training."

Although the deaf have received social assistance from the government, few have received access to capital to open a business. This is clear evidence that there is no equality in economic participation. On the other hand, the deaf typically have manual labour for men and the household work for women. This is because the small and large business sectors, as well as formal and informal sectors, rarely employ the deaf. This phenomenon makes it increasingly difficult for the deaf to find work and support their families.

The study found that, although there are gender differences in the lived experiences of deaf people, the poverty experienced by deaf women is not significantly different from that faced by deaf men. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender differences are a minor factor that increases the risk of poverty, with disability being the major factor contributing to deaf poverty. These results challenge the theory that disabled women are more economically vulnerable than disabled men, showing that the social and economic barriers faced by people with disabilities are similar. Gender is not the primary determinant of economic deprivation; rather, disability is the principal factor contributing to economic issues.

It is argued that discrimination against deaf people typically does not vary by gender. Disability-related stereotypes serve as powerful reason for excluding people with disabilities from opportunities.[32] People with disabilities, both men and women, experience the negative consequences of stigma. It can be seen in their inability to gain access to public services, which are often not designed with the needs of people with disabilities. The absence of accessible facilities not only prevents people with disabilities from participating in educational and career pathways but also intensifies the discrimination they encounter in everyday life.

The findings of this study are crucial as they offer a new perspective on how best to implement social programmes and public policies for the deaf.[33] Policies aimed at reducing poverty among the deaf should emphasize empowerment and inclusivity, rather than focusing too much on gender differences. It is impossible to achieve full gender equality without prioritising deaf rights such as access to education, employment, and public facilities. Governments and non-governmental organisations should be aware of this issues. Ensuring equal opportunities for all deaf individuals, irrespective of gender, and providing them with appropriate training and employment resources can enhance their

[31] Muazza Muazza and others, 'Analyses of Inclusive Education Policy: A Case Study of Elementary School in Jambi', *Jurnal* Kependidikan*: Penelitian Inovasi Pembelajaran*, 2.1 (2018), 1–12 <https://doi.org/10.21831/jk.v2i1.14968>.

[32] Marine Granjon and others, 'Disability Stereotyping Is Shaped by Stigma Characteristics', *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, November, 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302231208534>.

[33] Vee Yee Chong and Rosila Bee Mohd Hussain, 'Deaf Identity Construction in Malaysia', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 50.2 (2022), 87–95 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajss.2022.02.001>.

economic potential and substantially reduce poverty.[34]

The Deaf and Disabled Poverty Cycle

The concept of poverty is broadly defined and often debated among experts. Poverty is not as simple as a lack of financial resources, but inadequate living conditions are also an critical aspect of poverty. Lack of financial resources combined with poor health, housing and education are also part of the realm of poverty. Poverty and disability play a vulnerable role in socioeconomic life.[35] Approximately 14% of the world's population has a disability, with 80% of them residing in developing countries, where they represent one of the poorest demographic group. They are either unemployed, casual workers, and part-time workers and face high poverty levels due to low levels of education and skills. The relationship between poverty and disability is mutually reinforcing, with each condition exacerbating the other.[36] Families with disabilities more often require medical attention, which is costly, adding to the burden of household costs.

Disability can exacerbate or perpetuate poverty, leading to social isolation. People in developing countries find it difficult to access employment due to lack of opportunities, skills, education and social stigma. This lack of opportunity increases their risk of isolation. Additionally, poverty often hinders the fulfilment of basic needs, leading to developmental delays from malnutrition, which can result in disability. The intersection of poverty and disability creates significant barriers to participation in social and economic life for individuals with disabilities. This combination often leads to their isolation within communities, further restricting access to social and economic opportunities.

The cycle of poverty and disability shows how they interact with each other. Poverty can lead to disability, and disability can cause or exacerbate poverty. Humphrey stated this relationship, where the living conditions associated with poverty, including limited access to healthcare, heighten the risk of disability. In line with what NR said: "I am deaf because I was sick as a child, and my parents did not have money for treatment."

Supported by research by Kell, et al, states that the average deaf person comes from an underprivileged family. Poverty makes people vulnerable to diseases and injury that can lead to disability. For example, people living below the poverty line are more likely to have difficulty paying hospital fees, which causes their health conditions to deteriorate and increases their risk of disability.[37]

Disability can exacerbate family or individual poverty.[38] Those with disabilities often struggle to find decent work that is sufficient to fulfil their family's needs. In addition to the inherent physical challenges, they face discrimination in work environments, which presents a significant barrier. As experienced by GL: "I was called a deaf person in my old workplace, my workmates laughed at me for speaking with a hearing loss."

They lack access to financial resources and have difficulty participating actively in the economy due to hearing and communication limitations. Disability also adds to the cost of living due to special needs, such as long-term health care and medical equipment such as assistive devices, which are often costly. Research conducted by

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[34] Arni Surwanti, 'Model Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Penyandang Disabilitas Di Indonesia', *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, 5.1 (2014), 237–45.

[35] Alexandra Gartrell and others, 'Social Determinants of Disability-Based Disadvantage in Solomon Islands', *Health Promotion* International, 33.2 (2018), 250–60 <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daw071>.

[36] M N A Nasir, 'The Socio-Economic Situation of Disabled Persons in Malaysia', *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, 23.1 (2020), 42–44.

[37] Vera Genevey Hlayisi and Lieketseng Victoria Sekoto, 'Understanding Identity Construction among Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults: Implications for the Delivery of Person and Family-Centered Care in Audiological Rehabilitation', *Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences*, 4.November (2023), 1–15 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fresc.2023.1228116>.

[38] Muhammed Erkam Kocakaya and Kübra Polat Subaşı, *Disability and Poverty As a Causality Cycle : The Case of Turkey* (Istambul: İDEAL KÜLTÜR YAYINCILIK, 2023).

Luton, et al, showed that deaf people tend to avoid medical care due to financial constraints.[39] As shared by AA: "when I was a child, my family was reluctant to buy hearing aids because they were expensive. Alhamdulillah, when I was an adult, I received hearing aids from the government."

From AA's explanation, it shows that although there are attempts to provide aid, families with limited economic means face greater financial burdens, especially when they cannot afford essential medical devices. This cycle of poverty and disability is critical to health.[40] People living in poverty usually lack access to adequate health services,[41] such as regular check-ups or treatment needed when symptoms of illness arise. Without proper medical support, they are at risk of developing more severe health conditions which can lead to disability.[42] Financial limitations make it difficult for them to get the care they need due to communication barriers, despite the availability of program of The Healthcare and Social Security Agency (BPJS) and Healthy Indonesian Card (KIS). Special interventions are needed, such as providing workers who understand sign language, to make it easier for the deaf to interact to convey their health problems. Additionally, basic health and wellness training for the deaf could empower them to manage their health more effectively.

The social stigma experienced by people with disabilities also affects the cycle of poverty in the lives of deaf people. Deaf people do not only have hearing and language problem. They also have to face discrimination and stigma that hinder them in their daily lives.[43] There are still people who perceive disability as a shortcoming that prevents them from getting equal opportunities in education and career. They bear a greater financial burden because the stigma they face prevents them from obtaining opportunities that can improve their lives economically.[44] As a result, this stigma affects not only the individual with a disability but also the family, who may have to allocate additional time and money to care for a family member with a disability. Similarly, Marková's research shows that deaf people become dependent on family support.[45]

The cycle of poverty and disability shows the importance of education in breaking this loop.[46] People living in poverty often lack good access to education,[47] which in turn makes it difficult for them to find employment. The poor tend to only be able to access jobs that are high-risk and

[39] Meghan Luton, Helen T Allan, and Herminder Kaur, 'Deaf Women's Experiences of Maternity and Primary Care: An Integrative Review', *Midwifery*, 104 (2022), 103190 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2021.103190>.

[40] Md. Shahidur Rahman, 'Relationship Between Poverty and Disability in Developing Countries', *International Journal of Clinical Studies and Medical Case Reports*, 31.2 (2023), 1–3 <https://doi.org/10.46998/ijcmcr.2023.31.000756>.

[41] Owen O'Donnell, 'Health and Health System Effects on Poverty: A Narrative Review of Global Evidence', *Health Policy*, 142 (2024), 105018 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2024.105018>.

[42] Michael Palmer, 'Disability and Poverty: A Conceptual Review', Journal *of Disability Policy Studies*, 21.4 (2011), 210–18 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207310389333>.

[43] Brent C Elder and Michael A Schwartz, 'Qualitative Research within the Deaf Community in Northern Ireland: A Multilingual Approach', *Alter*, 15.3 (2021), 230–48 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alter.2021.04.001>.

[44] Lena Morgon Banks and others, 'Does Disability Increase the Risk of Poverty "in All Its Forms"? Comparing Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty in Vietnam and Nepal', *Oxford Development Studies*, 49.4 (2021), 386–400 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2021.1985988>.

[45] Ivana Marková, 'A Dialogical Perspective of Interaction: The Case of People with Deaf/Blindness', *Language Sciences*, 103 (2024), 101625 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2024.101625>.

[46] Nidhi Singal, *Disability, Poverty and Education* (London: Routledge, 2014) <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315829531>.

[47] Yumi Hartati and Emilia Alya Sabilla, 'Pendidikan Bagi Masyarakat Miskin Di Yogyakarta', *Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Indonesia*, 10.01 (2023), 11–24.

unstable with a good education.[48] It increases the possibility of workplace accidents or deteriorating health conditions, which increases the risk of disability. Conversely, because many educational institutions do not have the necessary inclusion programme facilities, deaf people face major challenges in education.[49] The limited access to education hinders their economic advancement, compounding the effects of poverty on their overall quality of life.

This cycle of poverty and disability requires special attention from the government and relevant agencies. To help people or families trapped in this cycle, inclusive and sustainable policy programmes are essential. Breaking the poverty-disability cycle requires more than economic policies; health and educational concerns must also be addressed.[50] In addition, it is important to highlight inclusive education, low-cost health services, business capital assistance and disability-friendly employment. These programmes can improve the overall wellbeing of the disabled community, rather than just providing periodic social assistance.

The impact of poverty on disability is not limited to the individual level, but it also affects communities and families. When someone in the family experiences a disability, the entire family often bears the financial responsibility. Families need to allocate a significant portion of their income to the cost of care or special needs associated with the disability. This financial burden can lower the family's ability to provide proper education, nutrition, and housing for other family members, which in turn will lead to more severe poverty.

Efforts to break the cycle of poverty can also be made through social inclusion for people with hearing impairments.[51] Social inclusion means creating an environment that allows people with disabilities to participate without discrimination in social, economic, and political activities. Involving deaf people in an inclusive approach to decision-making on government policies that may affect their lives could reduce social stigma and empower them to actively participate in society and government. Through social inclusion, deaf people are seen as part of society with the same rights and potential as others. By creating opportunities for their contribution, this approach can reduce their financial dependence on family and government support, thereby helping to disrupt the cycle of poverty.

The ability of deaf people to master technology can also play a crucial role in escaping poverty, especially in the digital age.[52] Raja added that technology use can alleviate poverty among individuals with disabilities.[53] Many tools and devices can help deaf people become more independent and productive. As stated by NV: "I sell online Shoop with WA, IG and FB."

With the access to appropriate technology, they can work or study from home, reduce their dependence on others, and gain more economic opportunities that were previously difficult to access. However, the high costs of technology and poverty often limit accessibility. To address this, inclusive policies aimed to reduce poverty, should include technology assistance programs for

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[48] Chika Maharani and others, 'Dampak Kemiskinan Terhadap Kualitas Pendidikan Anak Di Indonesia: Rekomendasi Kebijakan Yang Efektif', *Journal of Macroeconomics and Social Development*, 1.3 (2024), 1–10 <https://doi.org/10.47134/jmsd.v1i3.199>.

[49] Abdul Hakim Hidayat and others, 'Permasalahan Penerapan Pendidikan Inklusi Di Sekolah Dasar', *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 1.2 (2024), 102–11.

[50] Erva Karimatunisa and Taufik Muhtarom, 'Kebijakan Pemerintah Terhadap Pendidikan Inklusif', *Journal Innovation In Education*, 2.3 (2024), 101–7 <https://doi.org/10.59841/inoved.v2i3.1369>.

[51] Nayab Noonari Yasir and Mustafa Hyder, 'Building Resilient Community by Leaving No One Behind : Social Inclusion of Deaf People at Workplace in Karachi', *International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences*, 2.3 (2023), 809–18.

[52] Disability Employment Policy, *Disability and the Digital Divide: Internet* Subscriptions*, Internet Use and Employment Outcomes* (Amerika: Disability Employment Policy, 2022).

[53] Deepati Samant Raja, *Bridging the Disability Divide Through* Digital *Technologies*, *World Development Report*, 2016.

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financially disadvantaged individuals with disabilities.

Conclusion

This research concludes that poverty among people with disabilities is primarily rooted in disability itself rather than gender. Overall, people with disabilities, both men and women, face similar economic and social challenges. The findings rejects the theory that women with disabilities are more vulnerable to poverty. Instead, it shows that the main issues to be addressed are discrimination and limited access for all people with disabilities. Therefore, poverty reduction among people with disabilities should prioritize equity and inclusion, with an emphasis on removing the systemic barriers faced by this group in their daily lives. The cycle of poverty and disability is a complex problem that requires an integrated approach. The cycle includes both structural and individual issues that require inclusive and sustainable public policies. Poverty and disability are intertwined in a reinforcing cycle, which is exacerbated by lack of access to healthcare, education, employment opportunities and technology. The cycle of poverty can be stopped by creating policies that incorporate economic support such as residential entrepreneur training, business capital assistance, low-cost access to healthcare, inclusive education, and technology support.

This research has significant implications for society and government policy. It provides a foundation for initiatives such as regular entrepreneurship training and capital assistance for the deaf, who often face challenges in finding job. To overcome these problems, they open small businesses such as online shop. Their obstacle is the lack of capital for business. Additionally, improving the inclusivity of schools for students with disabilities through resources like specialized teaching aids and trained educators is crucial. On the other hand, schools also foster awareness among students and their families about the rights and capabilities of students with disabilities to cultivate an inclusive environment, free from

bullying and discrimination. The study's limitations include a lack of lack of quantitative data to measure gender-based poverty among people with disabilities. In addition, disability in this research is limited to deaf people only. Meanwhile, the disability for deaf is limited to the type of deafness which are their condition is congenital or acquired, and whether they have received regular medical treatment. The analysis of poverty among the deaf is based on income level, education, getting social assistance and type of employment or job.

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